



Laying a Path to Success

Creating a Brighter Future for our State by Opening the Doors of Opportunity for our Youth

I want to share with you a story about hope and success. A story about one man who brought a community together, offering a better future to our younger generations-Texas' future. If you attended Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District (PSJA ISD) before Dr. Daniel P. King arrived, you encountered a school district plagued by a dropout rate double the Texas average. Today, PSJA is totally different.

Thanks to the efforts of Dr. King and the community's response, PSJA ISD reduced its dropout rate by 80 percent and increased the number of graduates by almost 90 percent in three years, exceeding the state and regional averages. Since 2007, 1,400 previous



Dr. King shaking hands with one of his many graduates. Picture courtesy of Gabe Hernandez with the Texas Tribune.

By the Numbers

- ★ High School dropouts cost the State \$9.6 billion in lost revenue and expenses associated with lost wages, welfare payments, incarceration costs and diminished tax revenue.
- ★ A high school dropout is more likely to earn poverty-level wages of about \$14,500 a year. That's at least \$7,000 less than someone with a high school diploma.
- ★ Nearly 75 percent of state prison inmates are high school dropouts.
- ★ African-American and Hispanic students drop out of school at twice the rate of Anglo students.

dropouts have graduated high school, most of them with an average of six college credit hours.

Education drives economic growth and right now Texans are feeling the pain. Nationally, Texas ranks 43rd in graduating students and 36th in educational achievement. Texas dropouts cost our economy \$9.6 billion in lost revenue and expenses associated with lost wages, welfare payments, incarceration costs, and diminished sales tax revenue. These costs are unsustainable and unacceptable.

Texans with a high school diploma bring better returns to the state, socially and economically, with an increased opportunity to enroll in college. Other school districts in South Texas – Edinburg, La Joya, Hidalgo, Sharyland, and Mission – have implemented a dropout recovery program. A uniform program, however, will allow for statewide implementation. This session,

I authored Senate Bill 975, the Statewide Dropout Recovery Bill, to do just that: make the PSJA model available to students and parents throughout Texas.

An increased investment in education is the best economic development tool we have. Education can empower the youth in South Texas to improve their lives and those of their families. The PSJA model gives us the blueprint for something that really works. Dr. King's program connects young Texans to an attainable goal in their future. Those young Texans can be the first in their family to receive a high school diploma.

The best gift we can give our children is an education, particularly in an increasingly globalized world where students are not only competing with their neighbors but with people from all over the world. My bill creates a second chance for students. A second chance that benefits their parents and the community, all of whom want to see these kids graduate from high school.



Senator Hinojosa with (L to R) Nick Gonzalez of South Texas College, Dr. Shirley Reed, President of South Texas College; Dr. Daniel King, Superintendent of PSJA ISD; and Dr. Rebecca Wolfe with Jobs for the Future.

—Fueling the Economic Engines of Texas—

Texas faced an estimated \$27 billion shortfall before the start of the legislative session. Sales tax revenues remain depressed, and loopholes in our Tax Code allow certain taxpayers to skip out on their tax liability. Still, the future remains full of opportunity. Texas has a young, able, and willing workforce. Our private sector has an innovative and entrepreneurial spirit, and Texas’ work ethic is second to none.

Increasing Mobility - Harbor Bridge and U.S. 281 Corridor

Any discussion about economic development in South Texas requires the inclusion of investing in our transportation system. Transportation is the backbone of the Texas economy; billions of dollars pass through our ports of entry and move along our roadways.

I secured \$790 million for infrastructure improvements in the last three years to begin and complete transportation projects in South Texas. This includes \$127.7 million for U.S. 281 and \$500 million in leverage funds for the Harbor Bridge in Corpus Christi.

Connecting our local markets to the interstate system has to be a priority. That connectivity is vital to expanding returns on investments. Improved roads move people and products faster, ease traffic congestion, and allow for safer travel. The Harbor Bridge is a prime example. That bridge is the focal point of commerce in Corpus Christi – the main channel for trade and tourism. The city and the Coastal Bend region need a bridge upgrade to keep up with the demand for greater trade and mobility in the area.

Keeping up with Demand

As the population grows, so does the need of consumers and industry. Our state needs to do what earlier generations of Texans did-invested in upgrades to vital infrastructure.

I authored Senate Joint Resolution 4, creating Proposition 2 on the November Constitutional Amendment Ballot. Texans will have the opportunity to authorize \$6 billion in revolving water bonds to help cities, counties, and water service providers fund water projects. These bonds will fund infrastructure and water conservation projects at a reduced cost to ratepayers.



Harbor Bridge in Corpus Christi. Compliments of the Texas Department of Transportation.

Putting Texas Back to Work

Productivity relies on availability of work. Texas’ skilled workforce is ready for the challenge of building the economy of the future.

I worked harder than ever on obtaining \$5 million for the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) Program, designed to retrain Texans so they can rejoin the workforce in fast-growing, high-demand, and high-paying fields that require technical skills. These funds transition Texans who are looking for work into work stations that need capable hands.

I also created a joint interim committee to study the economic benefits of adding a cruise ship port to the South Texas Coast. Early estimates suggest that as much as \$2 billion in revenues can be realized by opening up a new port.

Higher Education: Texas’ Best Asset

An educated workforce attracts jobs and investment. Public and private interests want to locate new enterprises where capable employees and research resources are readily available. This session, I directed \$800,000 to the University of Texas-Pan American for the American Teaching Site’s operations in McAllen. A second injection of funds – \$500,000 – went to the Engineering Program at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi.

These funding streams give residents of Senate District 20 greater access to college resources and social development. Increased educational achievement strengthens our ability to train and maintain a competitive workforce. Our universities grow the profitability of our communities by luring companies and entrepreneurs to South Texas. Collectively, we improve our quality of life through higher education.



Senator Hinojosa speaking to students from Texas A&M - Corpus Christi.

Honoring Our Heroes

As a Vietnam Veteran, I understand the difficult, painful sacrifices that military families endure on a daily basis. Thousands of brave men and women, many of whom are from South Texas, risk their lives for us. Many have made the ultimate sacrifice, paying for liberty with their lives. Veterans and active-duty service personnel are always close to my heart, and this session I made sure we memorialized the commitment made by our armed forces of the Vietnam generation. Semper Fidelis, my friends.



Senator Juan “Chuy” Hinojosa with State Senator Steve Ogden and a member of the Monument Committee observing the Texas Capitol Vietnam War Monument model on the floor of the Texas Senate during the 82nd Legislative Session.

Texas Capitol Vietnam War Monument

This session, I added a rider to the Texas Historical Commission budget so the agency could start a matching fund up to \$500,000 for the Capitol Vietnam War Monument. The monument dedication is tentatively scheduled for early 2013. This matching fund will help us stay on schedule.

The monument honors Texas Vietnam and Vietnam-era veterans. For some, the war is a historical reference point. For many, the war continues to impact their daily lives. Help us commemorate our Texas heroes – those who are never forgotten. Visit www.buildthemonument.org for more information.

Giving Back to the Community

There are people in our communities that make an enormous impact. Dr. Ramiro Casso and Dr. Hector P. Garcia are those types of people. Their generous nature continuously inspires me in my work.

One of the more significant changes coming to South Texas is the expansion of managed care into the area. I added provider and patient protections to this change, which allows for a more seamless transition. Access to quality health care is essential to growing populations like ours in South Texas. That’s why I also worked to preserve funding for Driscoll Children’s Hospital.

Dr. Ramiro Casso - A man dedicated to protecting and serving the most vulnerable up to his last days, Dr. Ramiro Casso was a tireless champion of the poor, minorities, and the underserved. A life-long educator and legendary South Texas physician, Dr. Casso touched the lives of thousands. I admire Dr. Casso’s legacy of service and wisdom, but mostly his dedication to doing the right thing. He opened a medical clinic for farm workers and founded the Hidalgo County Health Care Corporation and the nursing program at South Texas College. He is personally credited with expanding access to health care at every level of need. He will certainly be missed.



Dr. Ramiro Casso.



Hector P. Garcia Memorial Highway.

Dr. Hector P. Garcia Day - Dr. Garcia’s life was one of public service. He cared for patients no one else would tend to and established the American GI Forum, improving the lives of Mexican-American veterans. Dr. Garcia led the civil rights campaigns of his age, fighting for Hispanic rights, veterans, and others who were denied educational opportunities and health care. It’s not a surprise he was the first Hispanic to be presented with the Medal of Freedom – truly a legacy worth honoring today.

Protecting our Borders

As a former Vietnam Veteran for the United States Marine Corps, I understand the needs of law enforcement. One of my priorities this session was to secure funding to help our law enforcement and homeland security efforts here at home.

I allocated over \$72.5 million for a comprehensive border security package that expands the tools our law enforcement agents have at their disposal to make our communities safe. The funds are being used for tactical equipment, weapons, operating costs, and extra man-hours.

There is still work to be done, but these efforts will address the security issues affecting South Texas by increasing our border security and law enforcement presence along the river.



Ranger Recon Team.

Tools for Law Enforcement

- ★ \$800,000 for vessels used in tactical operations on the Rio Grande.
- ★ \$133,333 for operating costs.
- ★ \$9 million for a High Altitude Surveillance Aircraft.
- ★ \$56 million for a 9-hour workday for DPS troopers - equivalent to 300 additional troopers.
- ★ \$266,667 for weapons.
- ★ \$4 million for the Border Prosecution Unit.
- ★ \$2.5 million for new gas-tank-rated Fiber-optic scopes.

Making Government More Efficient

As the only South Texas representative on the 12-member Sunset Commission, I work hard to ensure our communities have a voice when decisions are made about the efficiency of state government. Believe me when I say that there are no blank checks in this process; we make Texas work for you. The Sunset process is thorough, checking the growth of bureaucracy to maximize tax dollars and eliminate waste. The Sunset process helps us identify those state agencies that are fulfilling their intended purposes and which agencies are no longer necessary.

This session, we merged the Texas Youth Commission and the Juvenile Probation Commission into the Texas Juvenile Justice Department to save taxpayers money and to make the system work better for juveniles. We focused on community-based and juvenile probation treatment rather than incarceration, keeping kids close to home while still holding them accountable.

Other Sunset Bills I carried this session:

- ★ **Texas Water Development Board** - The rapid growth in South Texas and statewide and the recent droughts highlight the importance of the Water Development Board’s financing assistance. The Board helps Texas communities fund wastewater treatment plants and flood control projects, and implement water conservation plans. Water infrastructure improvements save water and money for future generations of Texans.
- ★ **The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs** - The department aids community development through affordable housing financing, energy assistance programs, and disaster recovery. The department will undergo a second review next session to better define the state’s lead agency role in disaster response situations.
- ★ **Texas Department of Transportation** - My priority in taking the lead on TxDOT was creating a 21st Century transportation system. Maximizing our economic output requires efficient mobility of people and goods. To be competitive, Texas must be agile and flexible. The TxDOT Sunset bill and corresponding investment in highway/road projects ramps up Texas’ commitment to commerce.



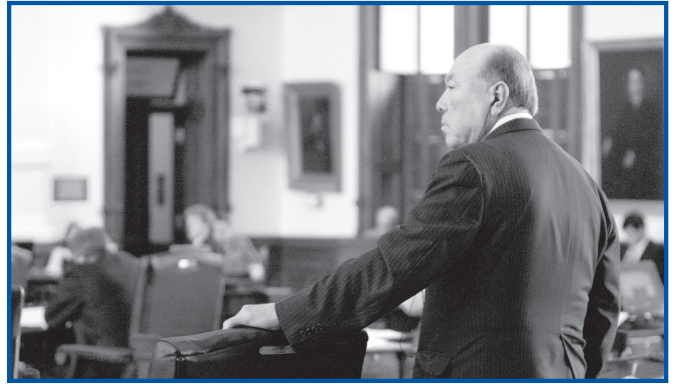
U.S. 281 Highway - Ben Bolt Project. Courtesy of the Texas Department of Transportation.

A Personal Note from the Senator

After more than two decades of public service, the 82nd Legislative Session proved to be one of the toughest cycles. We faced a multi-billion dollar revenue shortfall, a growing population, a national economic slowdown, and new political forces at play. You could say this session was about defense. As vice chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, I dedicated myself to reducing the budget cuts on the most crucial services Texas provides to its residents. We won some important battles, protecting funding for Texas A&M-Corpus Christi and the University of Texas-Pan American.

We also lost ground on securing access to services for the most vulnerable Texans. Health care and public education funding took a back seat to tax loophole clean-up and eliminating tax giveaways. We could have been more fiscally responsible, but the arrival of new political trends substituted rash judgment for good public policy.

The Texas Senate has a long history of bipartisanship, a history threatened by retail politics. I am proud of my work to stem the tide of reckless budget cuts and I will continue to push for tax policy reform. Small and



Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa in the Senate Chamber.

mid-sized businesses are paying a disproportionate share of the tax burden. Working families are still forced to make decisions between making ends meet and offering their children a college education.

After more than 20 years, I've learned one thing about public policy. The future is now. The policy decisions we make today are felt in real time. That's why we need to work together to make tomorrow a better reality for all Texans.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "J-J. Hinojosa".

The Word on the Street



Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa receiving the Casa "Big Voices for Little Texans" award from Andrea Sparks, Director of Governmental Affairs for Texas CASA.



Larry Raper presenting Senator Hinojosa with the Veteran's Recognition Plaque.

★ **CASA**: Senator Hinojosa received CASA's "Make a Difference Award" and was named one of Texas CASA's "Big Voices for Little Texans," for making children who are in the care and custody of Child Protective Services a priority.

"Senator Hinojosa should be named one of the best. He understands that children in the state's custody due to abuse and neglect allegations should be the state's priority. He was instrumental in funding Child Protective Services and CASA programs despite the difficult budget situation. He took extraordinary steps to see that CASA can continue to grow to provide more volunteers for more children."

Andrea Sparks – *Director of Governmental Affairs, Texas CASA*

★ **Transportation Advocates of Texas**: Presented Senator Hinojosa with an award for his significant contribution to good transportation policy during the recently concluded legislative sessions.

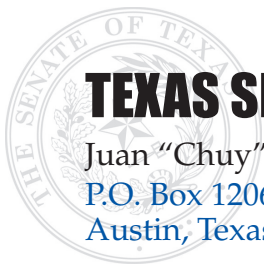
"You are one of four members of the House and four members of the Senate who we feel went above and beyond the call working to improve transportation policy in Texas."

Jim Reed – *Chairman of the Board, Transportation Advocates of Texas*

★ **In Country Motorcycle Club**: A 501 (c) (19) non-profit veteran's charitable organization whose members served on the ground or in the territorial waters of Vietnam presented Senator Hinojosa with the Vietnam Veteran's Recognition Plaque.

"Senator Juan 'Chuy' Hinojosa, a brother-in-arms, has blazed the pathway for the Vietnam Veterans to be properly remembered and honored in Texas. The plaque is a small payment on the debt we owe him."

Larry Raper – *State President, In Country Motorcycle Club*



TEXAS SENATOR

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TEXAS SENATOR JUAN "CHUY" HINOJOSA

Semper Fidelis

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how to

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