

Senator Judith Zaffirini



Reports to the Families of District 21

Dear Friends:

Great challenges are presented to us. Great opportunities are entrusted to our care. These inspiring words by the late Texas Gov. John Connally of Floresville are as true today as they were in 1963 when he delivered his first inaugural address.

My top priority as your state senator is to address the opportunities and challenges that will shape the future for the families of SD 21.

Blessed with bountiful natural resources and unlimited human potential, our large, diverse district stretches from the Rio Grande to the Colorado River. It includes borderlands and ranchlands, small towns and fast-growing cities and the majority of the booming Eagle Ford Shale.

More than 800,000 constituents live in the district's 18 counties, namely, Bee, Caldwell, Duval, Jim Hogg, Karnes, La Salle, Live Oak, McMullen, San Patricio, Starr, Webb, Wilson and Zapata; and parts of Atascosa, Bexar, Guadalupe, Hays and Travis.

Our shared priorities include educational opportunities for all; good jobs; safety and security; transportation; wise stewardship of our natural resources; and health and human services, especially for the very young, the very old and persons with disabilities.

Because of my committee assignments, I am uniquely positioned to make a positive impact in these arenas. I am grateful to serve as Chair of the Government Organization Committee; Co-Chair of the Legislative Oversight Committee on Higher Education Governance, Excellence and Transparency; and as a member of the Senate Committees



Senator Judith Zaffirini

My top priority is to address the opportunities and challenges facing Senate District 21 families.



EVEN YOUNG CONSTITUENTS like Viva Bonita Guillen of Starr County can learn from Senator Zaffirini's newsletter.

on Finance, Natural Resources, Transportation Funding, Higher Education, Redistricting, Health and Human Services and Administration.

In representing you in the Texas Senate, count on me not simply to prepare, but, rather, to over-prepare. What's more, my commitment always is to cast every vote by balancing the needs and interests of SD 21 families with those of our great state.

Because effective communication remains critical to our success, we will continue to maintain our open door policy and respond to every letter, email and telephone call. Your suggestions and feedback are important to me, which is why *Senator Judith Zaffirini Reports to the Families of District 21* is not only an award-winning progress report, but also a call for action and collaborative participation.

In his 1963 speech Gov. Connally issued another reminder that is relevant today: *As we strive to realize the fullest use of our natural resources in Texas, let us strive with greater purpose to realize the highest use of all our human resources.*

My prayer is that the Lord will continue to guide our work and actions and inspire us to help all Texans realize their full potential.

Judith Zaffirini

Judith Zaffirini
State Senator, District 21
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Mental Health Advocates Honor Senator Zaffirini

Senator Judith Zaffirini's decades of advocacy in the mental health arena have been inspired by her belief that all Texans should have access to quality mental health services. Recognizing her contributions to improving mental health in Texas, Mental Health America of Texas (MHAT) honored the senator with its second annual Mary Elizabeth Holdsworth Butt Award.

MHAT is the state's premier advocacy organization concerning mental health issues, and its mission is to promote mental health; prevent mental illnesses and addictions; and facilitate recovery through education, advocacy and services.

Charles Butt, CEO of H-E-B, established the award in 2012 in memory and honor of his mother. She served on the Board of the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (TDMHMR) when Senator Zaffirini, then a graduate student, worked there as an information specialist.

"I am delighted to continue to champion independent living and quality health services for persons with mental illnesses," Senator Zaffirini said. "This honor is especially meaningful because it is named after Miss Mary, an inspiring early leader for mental health. Over the last 50 years, we have made tremendous progress in the mental health arena, but there still is so much more to do."

The inaugural recipients of the Mary Holdsworth Butt Award were Joe and Dr. Teresa Lozano Long of Travis County. Senator Zaffirini encourages constituents and anyone with an inter-

est in mental health issues to volunteer for organizations such as MHAT and to advocate for persons with mental illnesses at the State Capitol and in their communities.

"Those who struggle daily with mental illnesses depend on our continued leadership and advocacy on their behalf," Senator Zaffirini said. "Our solutions must focus not only on diagnosis, prevention and treatment, but especially on education."

A member of the Senate Finance and Health and Human Services committees, Senator Zaffirini was an ardent advocate for legislation and funding that improve the lives of persons with mental illnesses long before she was elected to the Texas Senate.

At the age of 22 the future senator was named to the Board of Directors for the Texas Mental Health Association (MHAT's precursor) and served as its State Chair for Community Health Services and as State Co-Chair of Legislative Action. She volunteered her time to lobby the Texas Legislature and to testify in support of community mental health centers and independent living for persons with mental illnesses and intellectual disabilities.

Since 1987 she has won more than 10 awards for her mental health advocacy, including from the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Texas and the Texas Alliance for the Mentally Ill.

A former chair and current member of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee, she has passed more than 25 bills that specifically improve

mental health services for Texans, especially in the community. Her mental health legislation has included bills protecting patients at psychiatric hospitals from abuse and neglect, facilitating rapid access to mental health treatment for persons in crisis and helping prevent child relinquishment for the purpose of obtaining mental health services.

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services currently is working with stakeholders to implement the senator's child relinquishment legislation and already has secured slots at state mental health facilities for children who need them.

As a member of the Senate Finance Committee, Senator Zaffirini has helped secure \$15 million for additional state hospital capacity and led the successful effort for the more than \$248 million redesign and enhancement of the state's mental health crisis services. In 2007 she also helped secure \$6.1 million for Bexar County's Detox/Mental Health Project.

Her proudest moments include the legislature's appropriating \$109.4 million for enhanced adult crisis mental health services in 2009 and her happiest include eliminating waiting lists for mental health services in 2013.

"Our society has made significant progress in addressing mental health, but our state continues to lag behind when it comes to funding," Senator Zaffirini said. "Texas ranks next to last among the 50 states in per capita spending on mental health. We can and must do better."



COLLABORATION GETS RESULTS for Senator Judith Zaffirini and local leaders, including 1. Ena Peña, Celia Ruiz and Lorene Ruiz, Live Oak County; 2. Luling ISD educator Barbara Cubit, Caldwell; and 3. County Commissioner Murray Swaim, McMullen.

Texas Economy Strong, but Key Investments Needed

Buoyed by the robust development of the Eagle Ford Shale oil and gas play, Texas' economy is booming, and state revenues now are available to address adequately the critical needs of our state's rapidly expanding population. Texas' vast supply of natural resources, including oil, natural gas, timber, uranium and other minerals, and abundant and inexpensive land long have served the state well.

"Now that the national economic downturn largely is behind us, Texas is uniquely poised to continue its successful growth, especially because of increased demand for the energy resources our state is so skilled at developing," said Senator Judith Zaffirini, a member of the Senate Finance and Natural Resources committees.

One of the greatest indicators of the strength of the Texas economy is the sales tax. When the economy is growing, businesses and persons purchase goods and equipment and pay their workers who in turn make purchases that generate further economic activity.

The Comptroller of Public Accounts recently estimated that sales tax collections would grow 2.4 percent from 2013. Actual collections, however, soared to levels even greater. As of August, 2014, the state was on pace to collect 5.3 percent more than in the preceding year. If the trend continues, at the end of the budget cycle in September, 2015, the state treasury will have a more than \$2 billion surplus from excess sales tax revenues alone.

Another indication of a healthy economy is employment. During the

national economic downturn in 2011, the Texas unemployment rate was more than 8 percent—its recent worst. By the summer of 2014, however, it had recovered to a low of 5.1 percent, the best of any similarly sized state.

Other economic statistics as of August, 2014, are equally positive. Single-family building permits increased by 12.2 percent from July, 2013, to July, 2014, reflecting the large number of persons moving to Texas and the growth of our families. Similarly, Texas remains a top choice for businesses seeking to relocate and expand, and the value of non-residential construction has exploded, increasing by 204.4 percent in the same period.

"This is great news for Texas, but it is critical that the legislature seize the opportunity to invest in infrastructure now to preserve our state's ability to prosper in the future," Senator Zaffirini said. "Our four most pressing investment needs are water, transportation, education and health and human services."

Texas voters in November, 2013, took the first step to addressing the state's current and future water needs by approving a Constitutional amend-

ment to create two funds that will enable the completion of the projects in the state water plan.

Similarly, in November, 2014, voters will have the opportunity to approve a plan to divert some excess oil and gas tax revenue directly to the construction and maintenance of our state highways. The plan is estimated to generate only \$1.7 billion of the \$5 billion per year needed to maintain our current roadway conditions, and the legislature will need to appropriate additional funding for Texas' transportation infrastructure.

When it returns for the 84th Legislative Session in January, 2015, the legislature also will need to address an inadequate public education funding system that was ruled unconstitutional. What's more, health and human services will need to be supported to ensure that more Texans remain healthy, productive members of our economic system.

"Texas has experienced tremendous growth and economic success," said Senator Zaffirini. "If we do not invest in our needs and ensure adequate water, safe and reliable roadways and a healthy and educated workforce, however, our gains will be impossible to maintain."



SENATOR JUDITH ZAFFIRINI values interacting with constituents and advocates, including 1. Mike Peterson, Chair of Mental Health America of Texas; 2. veterans Merle Huston Jr., Police Chief Stan Bynum and Jonathon Wenthe at "Take a Vet to School Day" at Ingleside's Blaschke-Sheldon Elementary School; and 3. Margaret Trouart at the Campbellton Community Center in Atascosa County.

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Senator Judith Zaffirini Champions Needs, Priorities of Senate District 21 Communities

Stretching from the Rio Grande to the Colorado River and including all or part of 18 counties, Senate District (SD) 21 is large and diverse. A champion for all SD 21 communities, Senator Judith Zaffirini prioritizes visiting every county in her district and addressing issues important to constituents.

Putting the Brakes on Gravel Roads

When the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) announced a plan to convert certain paved highways to gravel, the response in SD 21 communities was overwhelmingly negative.

More than 200 South Texans voiced their opinions and asked questions at a regional public meeting in Cotulla, hosted by the Eagle Ford Shale Legislative Caucus, of which Senator Zaffirini is an organizer. SD 21 leaders from Atascosa, Karnes, La Salle, Live Oak, McMullen, Wilson and Webb counties participated in the event, which provided an opportunity for concerned citizens and legislators from throughout the region to question high-ranking TxDOT officials about the plan and discuss potential solutions.

“Our region’s rural highways are critical to our way of life, and we voiced our serious concerns about

the plan to turn them into gravel,” Senator Zaffirini said. “As a result of our collaborative efforts, the agency abandoned its original plan and now is partnering with local communities to keep our roads paved.”

A member of the Senate Finance and Select Transportation Funding committees, Senator Zaffirini plans to continue her quest for additional funding for state and local roads impacted by oil and gas development.

“Additional funding is long overdue and not only will improve safety on our overburdened roadways, but also will support our vital agriculture and energy industries,” she said.

Aiding Flood Recovery

The Halloween floods of 2013 affected hundreds of Caldwell, Guadalupe, Hays and Travis County families, many of whom lost their homes and belongings.

In the flood’s aftermath, Senator Zaffirini joined representatives of the Texas Department of Public Safety’s Division of Emergency Management in touring flooded areas. In Caldwell County they participated in the search for a missing woman and saw a tubing outfitter’s buses that had floated downstream and lodged in trees.

To aid recovery efforts, Senator Zaffirini made a \$1,000 donation to the Austin-Travis County Flood Relief Fund and provided 450 hot meals to families impacted by the floods. She also co-sponsored flood recovery town hall meetings and joined volunteers in helping their neighbors.

The senator interacted with families and volunteers at the Dove Springs Recreation Center, where persons affected by the flood were able to access critical recovery services.

“I was inspired by the amazing volunteers and by the optimism and perseverance of families who lost so much in the floods,” she

said. “We have made great progress in rebuilding, but there still is more to be done.”

Protecting the San Marcos River

The number of visitors to the beautiful San Marcos River, especially for tubing, has increased substantially in recent years, resulting in problems related to littering, trespassing and public intoxication.

In 2013 Zaffirini authored legislation to create a water-oriented recreation district along a portion of the river, which would have funded law enforcement and clean-up efforts.

Although the bill did not pass, Senator Zaffirini is continuing to work with landowners, businesses, local officials and law enforcement in the area to develop new legislative solutions for increasing public safety and reducing pollution on the river.

“Our goal is to keep our river pristine for future generations and prevent needless injuries or deaths,” she said.

Advancing Health, Emergency Preparedness

In 2014 Senator Zaffirini welcomed to South Texas the volunteers, Texas Military Forces and state agency personnel who comprise Operation Lone Star, which provides medical services to under-served communities in South Texas.

The effort evolved after the 2001 terrorist attacks, when the senator recommended that a special unit of the Texas State Guard be established to provide medical assistance to communities during times of emergency.

“Operation Lone Star is an outstanding example of a military and civilian collaboration with a clear and meaningful humanitarian mission,” she said. “The partnership provides not only critical medical services to thousands of children and

families who need them, but also enhanced emergency preparedness for our state.”

Since 1999 the effort has served more than 100,000 persons in South Texas, providing services including immunizations for children, blood pressure screenings, hearing and vision screenings, sports physicals and limited dental services.

Promoting Educational Opportunities

As a member of the Senate Higher Education Committee and Co-Chair of the Joint Oversight Committee on Higher Education Governance, Excellence and Transparency, Senator Zaffirini meets frequently with students, teachers, professors and administrators and works with them to expand educational opportunities for all.

In 2014 she joined local leaders in celebrating the grand opening and dedication of a new campus of Austin Community College, the first to be built in Hays County.

Senator Zaffirini also met with Starr County retired teachers to discuss changes made by the legislature impacting retirees and members of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS). In 2013 she voted for legislation increasing the state’s contribution to TRS and providing a long-overdue cost-of-living adjustment for retirees.

In San Patricio County, she welcomed Mathis ISD students and teachers “Back to School” and collaborated with the History Channel in honoring veterans at Ingleside ISD’s “Take a Vet to School Day.”

Addressing Community Concerns

A member of the Natural Resources Committee, Senator Zaffirini has prioritized addressing issues related to projects that could impact SD 21 communities.

For example, after hearing concerns from experts, local leaders and countless residents, Senator Zaffirini expressed her opposition to the proposed Post Oak Dump, which is located in proximity to Nash Creek in Guadalupe County.

In a letter to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), she wrote that contamination “could jeopardize the public health, safety and welfare of downstream users by polluting the drinking water supply and making the water unsafe for recreation, livestock and wildlife.”

Joining Senator Zaffirini in opposition to the dump were the other members of the county’s legislative delegation, its Commissioners Court and nine mayors.

She also hosted town hall meetings in Wilson and Karnes Counties where residents and local officials expressed concerns about injection wells and helped ensure their voices were heard by state regulatory agencies such as TCEQ and the Texas Railroad Commission.

“It is vital that controversial projects be hosted by supportive communities that consider them economic development, not in areas in which they are opposed strongly,” the senator said.



EAGLE FORD SHALE residents and leaders join Senator Judith Zaffirini in questioning Texas Department of Transportation officials at a meeting in Cotulla hosted by the Eagle Ford Shale Legislative Caucus.



SD 21 RANCHING FAMILIES are recognized by Senator Judith Zaffirini at the Texas Capitol. They include Bill and Charlotte Hellen, Jim Hogg County; Adrian and Diann Pawelek, Wilson; Sue and Lynn Witten, Wilson; Otilia and Robert Cortez, Duval; and William Fox Jr., Bee.



1. THROUGHOUT SENATE DISTRICT 21, Senator Judith Zaffirini prioritizes collaborating with constituents and stakeholders. She is shown in photograph 1. unveiling a Karnes County historical marker with Truett Hunt and Dr. Tom Kreneck;



2. joining Rep. Jason Isaac; Hays County Judge Bert Cobb and Commissioners Mark Jones, Will Conley and Debbie Ingalsbe; and San Marcos Mayor Daniel Guerrero and Council Member Jude Prather in congratulating publisher Don Moore Jr. and former managing editor Randy Stevens on the San Marcos Daily Record’s receiving a Texas Treasure Business Award;



3. reviewing Onion Creek flood recovery efforts with Travis County EMS personnel Christopher Hairston and Phillip Price; and



4. discussing Operation Lone Star with Col. Ricardo Muñoz Jr. and CSM Charles Harris of the Texas Army National Guard and Dr. Hector Gonzalez, the City of Laredo’s Director of Health.



THE BEST IDEAS for legislation often come from Senator Judith Zaffirini's constituents. She is shown in 1. with Zapata County Fair Queen Leanna Marie Saenz at "Zapata Rising"; in 2. with Seguin leaders Mayor Don Keil, Marty Keil, Susan Wuest and Frank Starcke admiring the portrait of the late Hilda Weinert of Seguin that hangs in the senator's office; and in 3. with Gloria Luna of South Bexar County.

Senate Committees Identify Challenges, Solutions

Regular sessions of the Texas Legislature are held every other year, but legislative committees meet continually to oversee the implementation of legislation, monitor state agencies, identify challenges and develop legislative solutions.

Chair of the Senate Government Organization Committee and Co-Chair of the Joint Oversight Committee on Higher Education Governance, Excellence, and Transparency, Senator Judith Zaffirini also serves on the Senate Finance, Higher Education, Health and Human Services, Redistricting, Transportation Funding, Natural Resources and Administration committees.

"To make the most of every hearing, I not only prepare, but over-prepare," Senator Zaffirini said. "I prioritize asking relevant questions and working with all stakeholders to develop meaningful legislation."

Government Organization

As Chair of the Government Organization Committee, Senator Zaffirini has focused on enhancing oversight of Texas' thousands of state contracts, valued at more than \$100 billion of the state's \$200 billion budget.

"Good management of state contracts allows limited state dollars to go farther," she said.

During the committee's 2014 interim hearings, agency officials emphasized proper training for employees who manage contracts and stressed effective communication with state contractors.

State Auditor John Keel, who audits state contracts regularly, identified areas for improvement in all phases of contract management.

"Testimony provided at our committee's interim hearings is critical to our developing successful legislation for the next session," said Senator Zaffirini, who has championed improving state contracting since 2001, filing legislation during seven legislative sessions.

Natural Resources

In 2014 Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst named Senator Zaffirini to the Senate Natural Resources Committee.

"Serving on this committee provides countless opportunities to champion the priorities of our district, including promoting responsible, sustainable development of Texas' energy resources and protecting our air, rivers and aquifers," she said.

Soon after her appointment to Natural Resources, Senator Zaffirini, an organizer of the Eagle Ford Shale Legislative Caucus, also was named to a subcommittee charged with examining the economic impact of the recent expansion of oil and gas production in Mexico.

"Development in Mexico has the potential to have a positive economic impact on both sides of the border," said the senator, whose district includes the majority of rigs, the majority of production and the highest-producing counties in the Eagle Ford Shale.

Higher Education

In 2014 the Senate Higher Education Committee, of which Senator Zaffirini is a member and former Chair, monitored the implementation of her 2011 legislation to improve the TEXAS Grant Program and

developed the next set of long-term goals for Texas' higher education system.

What's more, Senator Zaffirini worked closely with faculty, administration, governing boards and students to develop new legislation that will enhance higher education in Texas.

"Our priorities include improving degree completion rates and expanding access to higher education for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities," she said.

In 2014 Lt. Gov. Dewhurst promoted Senator Zaffirini from Co-Vice Chair to Co-Chair of the Joint Oversight Committee on Higher Education Governance, Excellence and Transparency, a position she also held from June, 2011, to January, 2013.

During Senator Zaffirini's previous tenure, the committee held five hearings featuring testimony from higher education leaders and experts regarding institutional excellence and best practices.

Health and Human Services

A member of the Health and Human Services Committee since 1987, Senator Zaffirini believes strongly that all Texans should have access to quality, affordable health services.

During the 2014 interim, the committee focused on issues including child protective services, mental health and women's access to health care.

What's more, Texas' health and human services agencies underwent review by the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission, which is tasked with identifying and eliminating waste, duplication and inefficiency in state government.

Zaffirini: Parks Protect Resources, Boost Economy

A member of the Senate Natural Resources Committee, Senator Judith Zaffirini champions Texas' state parks and the abundant recreational and educational opportunities they provide for Senate District (SD) 21 families.

"Our parks and open spaces are wonderful assets that impact positively the quality of life in our communities," she said. "They not only promote conservation and educate Texans about our natural resources, but also encourage active lifestyles and provide significant economic benefits."

The Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) operates six state parks in seven SD 21 counties, namely, Lockhart, Caldwell County; Choke Canyon, McMullen; Lake Corpus Christi, San Patricio; McKinney Falls, Travis; Lake Casa Blanca, Webb; and Falcon, Zapata and Starr.

TPWD is headquartered in SD 21 and is overseen by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission, chaired by Dan Hughes Jr. of Bee County. Senator Zaffirini sponsored his gubernatorial nomination.

The agency employs more than 3,000 Texans and operates an internship program that allows college students to gain hands-on experience in fields related to natural resources.

"Texas state parks boost local economic activity, particularly in rural counties," Senator Zaffirini said. "They create jobs directly; enhance sales and property tax revenue for local governments; and benefit nearby restaurants, retail and other businesses."

Communities throughout SD 21 are investing in parks, and Senator Zaffirini prioritizes legislation and funding supporting them. A member of the Senate Finance Committee, she has helped secure more than \$448 million for TPWD since 2005, including a 16 percent funding increase during the 2013 legislative session. In 2009 she also secured \$5.5 million for a special needs park in Bexar County.

Collaboration Key to Legislative Success

Collaboration long has been key to Senator Judith Zaffirini's success in passing legislation that addresses the needs and priorities of Senate District 21 families.

In 2013, for example, the senator brought together constituents and stakeholders to address Southeast Travis County's lack of recreational opportunities for families. In the 1990s the City of Austin set aside land for the Onion Creek Metropolitan Park, but failed to provide funding for the park's development.

Working closely with neighbors, city officials and the local business community, Senator Zaffirini developed and passed Senate Bill (SB) 1872, which created a municipal management district to fund the park's development. When complete, the 800-acre regional park will feature trails, ball fields, playgrounds, picnic areas and natural habitat.

In 2014 Senator Zaffirini joined La Salle County leaders in celebrating the rededication of the Leodoro Martinez Jr. Park in Cotulla, which is being expanded after voters approved \$8 million in bond funding.

She also has backed efforts in Guadalupe County to expand the Walnut Creek Trail and Greenbelt in Seguin, supported by a \$1.8 million grant from the Texas Department of Transportation.

She also worked in 2013 with Hays County leaders to develop and pass legislation authorizing counties to hire brokers to sell county land. When officials in Hays County tried to sell a parcel of unused property, they followed the laws that required them to post the sale directly to the public. This resulted, however, in only one offer at a price far lower than the market value.

"Professional brokers are experts at bringing buyers and sellers together, and they have vast knowledge of the market," Senator Zaffirini said. "Working with local leaders, we developed a bill that allows counties to sell property quickly and at the best price, thereby generating revenue and allowing county governments to focus on addressing local concerns."

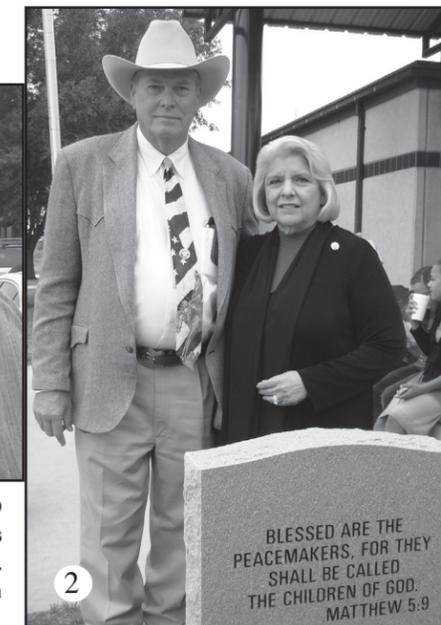
Collaboration also has been the cornerstone of her multi-year effort to improve conditions in Texas' colonias, including those in Bee, Duval, Jim Hogg, La Salle, San Patricio, Starr, Webb and Zapata counties. In 2009 legislation by Senator Zaffirini and Rep. Richard Raymond, D-Laredo, established a colonias task force that brought together a wide variety of stakeholders, including legal experts, local officials and organizations representing colonia residents.

In 2013 her SB 1599 turned the task force's recommendations into state law, thereby allowing for development while protecting colonia residents from unscrupulous practices and dangerous living conditions.

"I encourage all constituents of SD 21 to participate in the legislative process and suggest ideas for legislation," Senator Zaffirini said.



DISCUSSING IMPORTANT ISSUES with SD 21 officials is key to Senator Judith Zaffirini's legislative success. She is shown in 1. with Rep. Eddie Rodríguez, D-Austin; and in 2. with Wilson County Sheriff Joe Tackitt Jr.



Senator Zaffirini: Committed to Public Service

Since 1987 Senator Judith Zaffirini's tenure in the Texas Senate has been defined by her commitment to public service and her dedication to addressing the needs and priorities of Senate District (SD) 21 constituents.

That commitment has not wavered, and a diverse array of organizations continue to honor the senator for her legislative, public service and professional work. She has received more than 760 awards and honors, including more than 220 in communication.

A longtime champion for children, she was inducted in 2014 into the Boys and Girls Clubs of America National

Alumni Hall of Fame and received the Legislative Champion Award from the Texas Association of Boys and Girls Clubs.

She also received 26 awards in 2014 from the Texas Press Women and 6 from the National Federation of Press Women.

The first Mexican American woman in the Texas Senate, Senator Zaffirini also received the Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Legacy Award in 2013 from The University of Texas at Austin for her lifetime contributions to the Texas and Austin Hispanic communities.

She holds B.S., M.A. and PhD degrees from UT-Austin, each with a 3.9

grade-point average, and was named a Distinguished Alumna by the Texas Exes.

An organizer of the Eagle Ford Shale Legislative Caucus and a member of the Natural Resources Committee, Senator Zaffirini also was named a 2013 Legislative Champion by the Texas Oil and Gas Association.

Named four times to *Texas Monthly's* list of "10 Best Legislators," she is known for her legendary work ethic and her 100 percent perfect attendance in the Texas Senate since 1987, except for breaking quorum deliberately in 2003 to prevent a harmful and untimely redistricting. She has passed 795 bills and 52 substantive

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resolutions and maintained a career-long 100-percent voting recording, having cast 51,693 consecutive votes since 1987.

"I cast every vote by balancing the needs and interests of SD 21 families with those of our great state," Senator Zaffirini said.

Senator Zaffirini is featured in 24 books and referenced in 17, including, recently, the Texas Edition of *American Democracy Now*, a college government



FAMILY IS THE CORNERSTONE of Senator Judith Zaffirini's public service, and what she wishes for her own family is what she champions in the Texas Senate for all SD 21 families. Hers includes her husband, Carlos Sr.; and their son and daughter-in-law, Carlos Jr. and Audrey.

textbook authored by Brigid Harrison, Jean Harris, Gary Halter and Michelle Dear-dorff. The senator's story is told in *If Judy Pappas Can Do It, Anybody Can*, her booklet for students at Senator Judith Zaffirini Elementary School in Laredo.

The senator, a lecturer at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, has been married to Carlos Sr. for 50 years. Their son, Carlos Jr., an attorney and businessman, married Audrey Pieper in 2014.