

# Senator Judith Zaffirini



## Reports to the Families of District 21

### Dear Friends:

*It is simply this: No matter what our race, gender, religion, nationality or political party, we share the same dreams.* Although Senate District 21 is geographically, economically and culturally diverse, these words by Dianna Hutts Aston, award-winning children's book author and former editor of the *Hays Free Press*, reflect our unity despite our differences.

We all wish for a better future for our children and want the best for our communities, and I work tirelessly in the Texas Senate to promote policies that will make our great state a place where *all* Texans enjoy equal opportunities to pursue their dreams.

Our wonderful district is home to more than 800,000 persons in 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.

Though we are separated by many miles, we are connected by our shared priorities. These include education; public safety; transportation; jobs and a strong economy; wise stewardship of our natural resources; a fair justice system; and health and human services, especially for the very young, the very old, persons with disabilities and veterans.

My committee assignments allow me to advance these priorities consistently. This year Lt. Governor Dan Patrick appointed me to serve as Vice Chair of the Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee and as a member of the Administration, Business and Commerce and State Affairs committees. Earlier he named me to the Texas Judicial Council and Texas Access to Justice Commission, and colleagues elected me Chair of the Eagle Ford Shale Legislative Caucus.



*“Though we are separated by many miles, we are connected by our shared priorities.”*

– Senator Judith Zaffirini

Stressing our bipartisanship in the Republican-dominated Texas Senate, the lieutenant governor noted that senators unanimously passed 77 percent of the 463 Senate bills passed into law. He added that “100 percent had bipartisan support of at least one Democrat in favor.”

The 86th Legislative Session provided many opportunities to address the shared needs of our district. We passed school finance reform legislation that will increase funding and give much-needed pay raises to teachers, counselors, nurses and librarians. Other bills will make our schools safer, protect benefits for retired teachers, eliminate surprise medical billing and promote transparency in health care costs.

These achievements would not have been possible without your sharing your perspective and priorities. Such feedback is crucial to our success, especially because some of my best legislation was suggested by constituents. My staff

and I remain committed to our open-door policy and respond to every letter, email and telephone call.

As Dianne Hutts Aston wrote, *we pray for peace, for the well-being of those we love, for safe communities and affordable education...for the ability to pursue our ambitions.* My prayer is that the Lord will continue to bless us all with grace and good will, family and friendship, and health and happiness as we collaborate to forge a better future for our children and grandchildren.

May God bless Texas!

*Judith Zaffirini*

Judith Zaffirini

State Senator, District 21

[www.zaffirini.senate.texas.gov](http://www.zaffirini.senate.texas.gov)

# Ed Reform Bill Includes Longtime Zaffirini Priorities

In a legislative session defined by far-reaching changes to public education, Senator Judith Zaffirini advanced many longtime policy priorities, including early childhood education, improved services for students with disabilities and affordable higher education.

House Bill (HB) 3 by Rep. Dan Huberty, R-Humble, and Senator Larry Taylor, R-Galveston, provided more than \$11 billion in new funding for public schools and incorporated several bills that Senator Zaffirini filed separately. These included her Senate Bill (SB) 36, providing funding for full-day, high-quality pre-K for all four-year-olds; and her SB 279, requiring graduating high school students to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).



**LOCAL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS**, such as the Bee County Sheriff's Junior Deputy Program, count on Senator Judith Zaffirini's support. She enjoys welcoming visitors like Bee County Sheriff Alden Southmayd (L), Bee County Judge Stephanie Moreno (R) and the 2019 Junior Deputies to the State Capitol throughout the year.

"I was delighted that two of HB 3's key components were two of my highest priorities relating to public education—full-day pre-K and college affordability," the senator said.

## Resolutions Honor Victims, Advocates

Every year Senator Judith Zaffirini authors resolutions to mark special occasions and to honor exceptional efforts. This year she passed 31, including the following:

Senate Resolution (SR) 75 by Zaffirini paid tribute to the incredible courage of Stephen Willeford, whose selfless and rapid response to the 2017 mass shooting at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs averted further tragedy. "Mr. Willeford is a true Texas hero," Senator Zaffirini said. "He risked his life to save others."

Her SR 738 memorialized young Texans killed in recent hazing-related incidents and recognized their families and friends for speaking out regarding this harmful practice. Their advocacy was critical to her passing Senate Bill 38, her anti-hazing legislation.

Her SR 616 honored the Texas Access to Justice Commission, whose annual Champions of Justice Gala has raised more than \$3 million to provide legal aid to Texas veterans. "These funds support critical legal services for many courageous men and women who fought tirelessly to protect our freedom," Senator Zaffirini said.

Senator Zaffirini also won several significant victories in higher education this session. After the *New York Times* and *Texas Tribune* reported in 2018 that Texans were being denied occupational licenses because they were in default on student loans, she filed Senate Bill (SB) 37, prohibiting the practice.

"Impeding Texans' ability to make a living—and pay their debts—because they are in default on student loans is as callous as it is counterproductive," Zaffirini said. She also passed SB 1504, which authorized using approximately \$127 million from the expiring B-on-Time Student Loan Account to support at-risk students.

One of Senator Zaffirini's highest profile successes this session was passing SB 38, a sweeping reform of the state's anti-hazing law. Addressing the need for greater accountability and transparency on campus, SB 38 facilitates the prosecution of perpetrators of hazing, defines coercion to consume a drug or alcohol as hazing and strengthens institutional reporting requirements. She insists, however, that work remains to be done: "Three Texas students died in hazing-related incidents in the last two years. Hazing has deep cultural roots and fierce protectors, and only a collective effort will eradicate it. I will monitor the implementation of SB 38 and continue to support our colleges and universities in their efforts to end hazing."



**LOCAL OFFICIALS AND PUBLIC SERVANTS** do essential work in communities across SD 21. (1) Senator Judith Zaffirini greets members of the Live Oak County Historical Commission: (L-R) Gipper Nelson, Robin McKinney, Cindi Robinson, Mary Margaret Campbell, Leslie Walker and Bernard Lemley. (2) She meets SD 21 police officers and their families at the Star of Texas awards ceremony, which honors first responders who were seriously injured or killed in the line of duty. They are (L-R) Deputy Jay Elton and Elizabeth Johnson from Caldwell County; Deputy Benjamin and Alyssa Gieselmann, Hays County; Nile Copeland, son of fallen San Marcos Police Officer Kenneth Copeland; and Trooper David Nelson and Jessica Alcantar and their daughter, Harper, Guadalupe County.



**REGULATORY DISTRICTS PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT.** (1) Senator Judith Zaffirini prioritizes meeting with constituent groups, including soil and water conservation district representatives (L-R) Rudy Rodríguez, Leroy Wolff, Michael Korus, Jeanette Jendrzej, Lambert Jendrzej, Emma Martínez, Lupe Elizondo, José L. Martínez and Robert Elizondo from Atascosa, Duval, Karnes and Live Oak counties, who provide valuable insight into local issues. (2) Jim Hogg County Sheriff Erasmo Alarcon Jr. is among the SD 21 law enforcement officers who collaborate with the senator to improve public safety and to respond to constituents' concerns about their families and communities.

## Bills Protect Rights, Promote Vital Services for Texans

Thoughtful research and data analysis often uncover systemic problems that require legislative solutions.

A 2018 investigation by the *Austin American-Statesman*, for example, revealed appallingly inadequate oversight of safety at childcare facilities across the state. One of seven lawmakers to file bills tackling this issue during the 2019 legislative session, Senator Judith Zaffirini passed Senate Bill (SB) 708, requiring data collection regarding child safety and staff-to-child ratios.

"This legislation will not only make more information available to parents in need of childcare services, but also give legislators critical data to make Texas' daycare facilities safer for all children," Senator Zaffirini said. It was one of her 17 bills that will improve access to essential health and public services and ensure equitable treatment, especially for children, pregnant women, new mothers and persons with mental illnesses who are in the criminal justice system.

Low-income pregnant women and working mothers often face significant barriers to maintaining their health and the health of their children. Senator Zaffirini and Rep. Mary González, D-Clint, passed House Bill (HB) 25, establishing a pilot program to allow children to accompany their mothers who rely on Medicaid transportation services. This will make it easier for expecting and new mothers to access vital pre- and post-natal care. The two also passed HB 541, which clarifies that women may express

breast milk at public sites where they can breastfeed, facilitating their earlier return to work after giving birth.

Another vulnerable population supported by the senator's legislation, Texans with mental illnesses are more likely to encounter law enforcement and to enter the criminal justice system: Approximately 35 percent of inmates in state-operated correctional facilities have a history of mental illness.

"My SB 562 will ensure defendants with a mental illness or intel-

lectual disability are transferred as soon as possible to an appropriate setting, rather than spending months in a county jail without access to proper therapy," the senator said.

What's more, she and Rep. Four Price, R-Amarillo, passed HB 601, which requires experts to interview defendants in custody who are suspected of having a mental illness or intellectual disability. "Judges can then help connect them with suitable resources," she said.

## Success Requires Collaboration

The Texas Senate's bipartisanship is reflected in its passing only 18 of 1,816 bills strictly along party lines during the 86<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session. Senator Judith Zaffirini believes strongly that the ability to collaborate with members of both political parties and to coordinate across both chambers is an essential skill of an effective state legislator.

Partnering with Republican Representative Matt Shaheen and Democratic Representative Senfronia Thompson, for example, she passed bills that improve Texas' legal system.

House Bill (HB) 435 by Rep. Shaheen and Zaffirini will prevent wasteful government spending by courts attempting to recover fees they know are uncollectible, while HB 402 by Rep. Thompson and Zaffirini will ensure publicly available, online legal materials are kept accurate and up-to-date.

"The values uniting Texans are deeper than the differences dividing us," the senator reflected. "It is more critical than ever to work with those across the aisle and in the other chamber to advance policy that will strengthen our state."

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# Senator Zaffirini: Legislation Will Advance Justice, Protect Communities in Senate District 21

Reducing barriers to justice and safeguarding Texans from all forms of abuse always are priorities for Senator Judith Zaffirini. Accordingly, the senator passed legislation in 2019 to strengthen existing laws and ensure they—and law enforcement—work more effectively for her constituents and for communities across our great state.

## Increasing Access to Justice

As a member of the Senate Committee on State Affairs, Texas Judicial Council and Access to Justice Commission, Senator Zaffirini prioritizes equal access to justice, especially for low-income Texans. She continues to lead the charge to eliminate debtors' prisons in Texas, which exist despite their prohibition by the United States and Texas Constitutions.

In 2017, for example, she passed Senate Bill (SB) 1913, which reduced the number of Texans imprisoned for fine-only offenses because they could not pay court costs, fines and fees. The bill held defendants accountable while providing judges greater flexibility to employ payment plans, community service and waivers.

"Interestingly," Senator Zaffirini said, "fee collections actually increased as a result of manageable payment plans."

Building upon SB 1913, in 2019 she passed SB 346 to streamline and ensure the fairness and constitutionality of court costs, fines and fees. The bill provides that if a defendant notifies the court that he or she has difficulty paying fines and costs, the judge must determine whether the judgment imposes undue hardship and, if so, may issue an alternative defined by her earlier bill.

Also enhancing access to justice are her SB 41, which encourages appointing *pro bono* attorneys for low-income Texans; and SB 40, which allows courts to continue proceedings in an alternative location after a natural disaster.

## Protecting the Vulnerable

Senator Zaffirini continues to be an effective champion for our most vulnerable Texans. She helped secure \$5 million for the Guardianship Abuse, Fraud and Deterrence program. Created by her SB 31, the program will help prevent the exploitation of persons who need a legal guardian because they cannot care for themselves. It enables the Office of Court Administration to hire auditors and to establish an electronic database to review all guardianship cases in the state and ensure they comply with state laws.

"We developed this legislation after hearing testimony about terrible physical and financial abuse that went undiscovered throughout the state for years," the senator said. "I hope with this additional support, guardianship cases will receive more effective oversight, precluding further harm."

Texans in nursing homes also need protection from potential abusers. Accordingly, House Bill (HB) 3079 by Rep. Candy Noble, R-Lucas, and Senator Zaffirini gave the Health and Human Services Commission clear authority to investigate abuse, neglect and exploitation by representatives of home and community support services agencies providing inpatient hospice services.

Another growing area of concern is Internet fraud and abuse of elder Texans. Persons 65 or older are especially vulnerable to "phishing," the fraudulent practice of sending emails or creating websites to solicit personal information such as passwords and credit card numbers. With the continued expansion of Internet access, this cybercrime unfortunately is becoming more prevalent. Senator Zaffirini worked with Rep. Shawn Thierry, D-Houston, to help protect persons from this despicable practice. They passed HB 883, allowing a court to award three times the amount of actual damages in a phishing case if the victim is 65 or older.

Ensuring bad actors are held accountable is likewise critical when it comes to protecting more than 5.4 million schoolchildren. In 2018 the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services confirmed 66,382 cases of child abuse, of which 65,000 were reported by school employees.



TRAVIS COUNTY'S VALOR PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS are among the hundreds of students who visit Senator Judith Zaffirini at the Capitol. When the Senate is in session, she introduces them from the Senate gallery.

Although those who report suspected abuse or neglect, as required by law, are protected from suspension, termination or discrimination, some have been evaluated negatively, harassed by colleagues or transferred to schools across town. To resolve this issue, Senator Zaffirini and Rep. Victoria Neave, D-Dallas, passed HB 621, which deters retaliation against persons who report suspected abuse or neglect, thereby helping to safeguard our children and the adults who rightly act in their interests.

## Combating Skimming

Skimming, the use of electronic devices to steal and record credit card information from unsuspecting persons, is a persistent headache for consumers and businesses alike.

A three-time victim of skimming, Senator Zaffirini partnered with Rep. Mary Ann Perez, D-Houston, to pass HBs 2624, 2625 and 2945.

## Understanding Insurance

Insurance is a part of every Texan's life: Every vehicle on the road must be insured, and the overwhelming majority of homeowners have a policy as well.

Given the complexities of that business, it often feels like an insurance policy is written in a foreign language. Providers are hesitant to simplify their communications with consumers, however, due to fear of liability. This results in a stagnant customer base for providers and frustration for buyers.

Believing that Texans should understand the products they often are required to purchase, Senator Zaffirini sponsored and passed HBs 1554 and 1555 by Rep. John Smithee, R-Amarillo. The bills create a "safe harbor" for insurers who provide translations of policy documents into foreign languages or plain language policy summaries, respectively.

Their bills incentivize businesses to report perpetrators, prosecute cases more effectively and establish a fraud center to coordinate police activities statewide.

"Getting skimmed is not only an inconvenience, but also a form of organized crime and a violation of a person's privacy," Senator Zaffirini said. "Worse, for persons living paycheck to paycheck, it can mean missing a rent or car payment, which can lead to further negative financial consequences. Our legislation provides meaningful consumer protections and equips our law enforcement officials with the tools they need to bring these criminals to justice."

"Ensuring reasonable protection from liability so insurance providers and customers can communicate more effectively is a win-win solution for everyone involved," the senator said.

## Promoting Competition

In 1999 the Texas Legislature deregulated the electricity generation market to allow for competition in the retail sale of electricity, requiring aggregators to register with the Public Utility Commission (PUC).

Aggregators bundle service from multiple customers and sell it to a Retail Electric Provider (REP) to obtain a lower price. Registering aggregators made sense because they were serving as an intermediary between the customer and the REP.

Recently, however, new businesses have been serving as intermediaries between customers and REPs. These entities provide personalized brokerage services, akin to offering to shop for a customer every month to get the best deal, in exchange for a fee.

Brokers have been successful at gaining customers, and most of them are good, honest businesses offering innovative services to customers. In fact, many of them register as aggregators, just to be on record with the PUC.

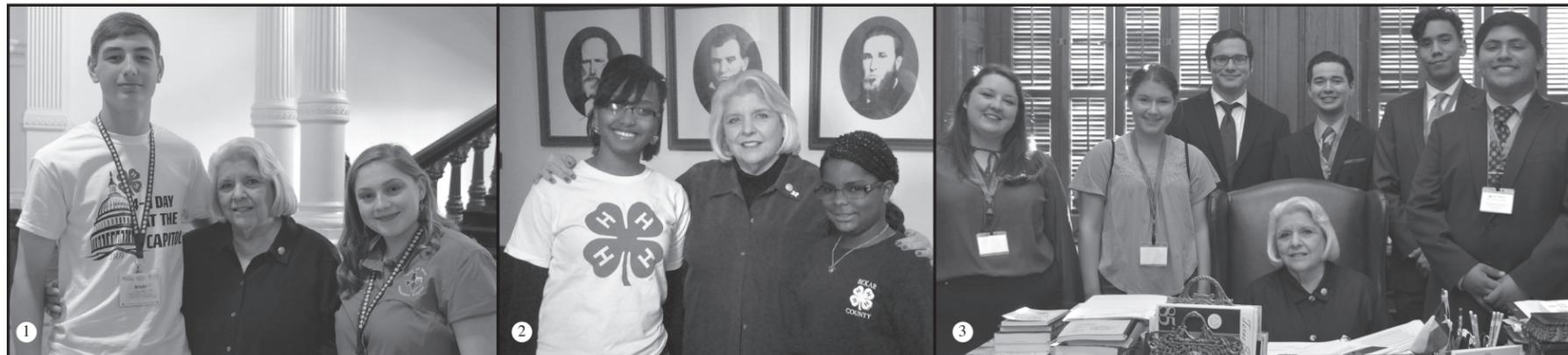
Unfortunately, a handful of brokers have provided poor or misleading services such as misrepresenting pricing, hosting deceptively similar websites to reputable ones, ignoring customer protection rules or failing to provide fee transparency.

Because brokers are not on file with the PUC, when customers have a complaint, the PUC has little recourse to help them, disincentivizing persons from participating in the market.

Senator Zaffirini's SB 1497 is a consumer protection measure that enhances the PUC's oversight of these brokers. It requires any entity providing brokerage services to file a form with the PUC and to comply with the PUC's basic customer protection rules.

"SB 1497 is an important bill that will improve the competitive retail electric market in Texas," Senator Zaffirini said.

"When a customer has been financially harmed by an unscrupulous broker, he or she is unlikely to want to shop for new service in the future, and competition works best when customers want to shop."



INTERESTED IN STATE GOVERNMENT? Senator Judith Zaffirini believes it's never too early to engage with your elected representatives! She always is delighted to meet young constituents, including (L-R) 4-H participants from (1) Starr and (2) Bexar counties; and (3) Wilson County's Floresville High School students Meagan Seesengood, Ashley Orr, Patrick Silva, Nathan Balboa, Trinidad Herrera and Andrew Gonzales. Parents and educators can schedule meetings and receive assistance with tours via the senator's Capitol or district office.



CONSTITUENT FEEDBACK IS CRITICAL to Senator Judith Zaffirini's legislative work. She is shown with (1) Emma Garcia, executive director, Camino Real Community Services, Atascosa County; and with (2) Cliff Hoskins and Jim Donnell, former honorary vice president, Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, McMullen County. They are among many constituents who share their expertise.

## Zaffirini: Diverse Problems Need Diverse Solutions

Stretching from the Rio Grande to the Colorado River, Senate District (SD) 21 is large and diverse. Always interested in meeting the needs and interests of SD 21 communities, Senator Judith Zaffirini prioritizes issues that benefit constituents. The following are samples of those addressed during the 2019 session.

### Emergency Preparedness

During emergencies, it sometimes can take first responders hours or even days to locate and notify next of kin that their loved ones are injured or deceased.

To ensure families are notified timely, Senator Zaffirini passed Senate Bill (SB) 1764, allowing Texans to update their emergency contact information on the Department of Public Safety's website.

In the aftermath of recent shootings, including in SD 21, it is critical for schools to be prepared for such an event before it occurs. Accordingly, Senator Zaffirini sponsored House Bill (HB) 2195 by Rep. Morgan Meyer, R-Dallas, requiring public school district multi-hazard emergency operations plans to include a specific policy for responding to an active shooter.

### Unnecessary Fees, Costs

To provide guidance for representatives of a deceased tenant's estate regarding their right to terminate the tenant's lease and retrieve

this or her belongings at no cost, Senator Zaffirini and Rep. Ina Minjarez, D-San Antonio, passed HB 69.

"This legislation will prevent unfair outcomes or outright exploitative behavior when leases fail to provide protections in this tragic scenario," the senator said.

What's more, to ensure taxpayers are not liable for penalties and interest on a property tax bill that becomes delinquent as a result of an error by a mortgage lender, Senator Zaffirini and Rep. Greg Bonnen, R-Friendswood, passed HB 1885.

### Economy and Environment

A 2017 Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) study found that recycling is a critically important industry in our state, supporting more than 17,000 jobs and providing more than \$3.3 billion of positive economic impact.



FISHERMEN FROM STARR AND ZAPATA COUNTIES are among the many constituents who testify at Capitol hearings to support, oppose or amend legislation. Juan Escobar and Cesar Garza are shown with Senator Judith Zaffirini after a Senate Water & Rural Affairs Committee hearing.

To promote growth in Texas, Senator Zaffirini passed SB 649, which requires TCEQ to produce a plan to increase the use of recyclable materials as feedstock in processing and manufacturing and to develop a recycling education program to help reduce contamination of recyclables.

"Using recyclables as feedstock will help create domestic markets for recyclables generated in the state, supporting associated jobs that affect communities across Texas. It also will reduce dependency on unstable foreign markets," the senator said.

### Full Inclusion For All Texans

"Knowing what and where services are needed is the first step in advocating for Texas veterans," Senator Zaffirini said. "It is important that we equip their advocates with the tools needed to successfully reach them."

Accordingly, her SB 2104 creates the Texas Veterans County Service Officer Task Force to study the impact and efficacy of County Service Officers' efforts.

She also worked with Rep. Four Price, R-Amarillo, to pass HB 1074, which prohibits age discrimination in job training. "This legislation will help older workers obtain essential skills relevant in today's evolving workplace," the senator said.

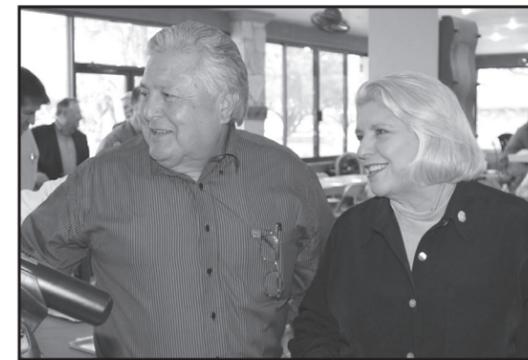
## Persistence, Resilience, Collaboration Are Keys to Success

Legislators welcome opportunities to consider new ideas and develop them into bills that address problems innovatively. One of the most important aspects of successful policymaking, however, is re-filing good legislation that wasn't passed or signed by the governor the first time.

Senator Judith Zaffirini begins preparing for each session by reviewing her previous bills that didn't become law, understanding why they didn't and determining whether they should be filed anew.

"Persistence and resilience are keys to passing meaningful legislation," she said. "This session, for example, I passed my hazing bill on the fifth attempt in 12 years; and Guardianship Abuse, Fraud and Exploitation Deterrence on my second try. What's more, while my universal pre-K bill—which I filed for the third time—did not receive a hearing, the Legislature increased funding for pre-K from half-day to full-day for eligible children as part of our school finance reform bill. Our efforts occasionally are thwarted temporarily, but we persist in passing legislation that protects our vulnerable fellow Texans."

A bill passed by the Legislature ultimately may be vetoed by the Governor. "My staff and I analyze veto messages and identify ways to answer any questions, resolve any perceived shortcomings or write amendments to overcome disagreements.



VISITING SD 21'S 18 COUNTIES IS IMPORTANT to Senator Judith Zaffirini. She enjoys interacting locally with elected officials such as Cotulla Alderman Juan Garcia from La Salle County and constituents of all ages.

"We are working with the governor's staff and stakeholders, for example, to re-file significant legisla-

## Legislature Addresses Coerced Debt

"Coerced debt" is a relatively new term used to describe a form of abuse wherein abusers force their victims to engage in nonconsensual credit-related transactions. Exercising financial control, they deprive victims of access to funds, damage their credit and limit their ability to escape abusive situations.

As one survivor recalls, "My husband, who was physically abusive, would joke that he kept me around for my good credit. It was only after we separated that I realized he hadn't been joking—he had taken out thousands of dollars in credit card debt in my name without my knowledge, and I was left on the hook."

Partnering with national experts, victim advocates and legal profes-

sionals, Senator Judith Zaffirini filed Senate Bill 269, first-of-its-kind legislation to address coerced debt. Ultimately passed as House Bill 2697 by Rep. Morgan Meyer, R-Dallas, and Zaffirini, the bill specifies that coerced debt is a form of identity theft, meaning perpetrators can be prosecuted for such financial abuse. Equally important, it provides victims access to the same tools that victims of identity theft have to rebuild their credit. "Stopping coerced debt can be the difference between life and death," said Zaffirini, "especially when a victim is fleeing from danger. This new law is an important first step. We will work hard to strengthen it next session."



CELEBRATING WOMEN JUDGES DAY is a highlight of the Texas Senate. Senator Judith Zaffirini discusses judicial issues with (1) (L-R) Justice Rebeca Martinez (Bexar), Judge Roselee Bailey (Karnes), Justice Gisela Triana (Travis), Justice Chari Kelly (Travis) and (2) judges Starr Bauer and Janna Whitley (San Patricio).

# Senator Zaffirini: Historically Productive Legislator

Senator Judith Zaffirini passed a record-breaking 127 bills in 2019 and has passed 1,160 bills since 1987, more than any legislator in the history of Texas, according to digital records dating back 50 years. The highest bill-passer for the third consecutive session, she has cast 64,330 consecutive votes and maintained a 100 percent voting record since 1987, except for breaking quorum deliberately to prevent an untimely re-redistricting that the U.S. Supreme Court ruled violated the Voting Rights Act and disenfranchised voters in Senate District 21.

Senator Zaffirini has received more than 1,000 awards and honors for legislative, public service and professional work, including 369 in communication. The first Hispanic woman elected to the Texas Senate, the second highest-ranking senator and the highest-ranking woman senator, she was inducted into the 2019 Texas Women's Hall of Fame and honored at a ceremony hosted by Governor Greg Abbott and First Lady Cecilia Abbott.

The senator won 16 statewide awards—10 first place, 4 second place

and 2 third-place—in the 2019 Press Women of Texas annual communications contest. Four of her first-place Texas winners received first, second and honorable mention nationwide awards from the National Federation of Press Women. For the twelfth time, she also won the Sweepstakes Award for the most winning entries in the state competition.

Highlighted in 25 books and referenced in another 19, she holds B.S., M.A. and PhD degrees—each with a 3.9 grade-point average—from The University of Texas at Austin. Her beloved alma mater



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named her a Distinguished Alumna, an Outstanding Alumna of the Moody College of Communication and a Distinguished Hispanic Alumna; awarded her the Presidential Citation; and inducted her into *The Daily Texan* Hall of Fame.

Senator Zaffirini's son, Carlos Jr., honored her as the namesake of endowed scholarships at UT-Austin and its law school, Baylor College of Medi-

cine and Texas A&M International University; a grant program that helps Texas teachers pay their student loans; and a patient suite at the UT Dell Seton Medical

Center. The Beaumont Foundation also endowed a scholarship honoring her and her husband at A&M International.

Senator Zaffirini is the namesake of an elementary school in Laredo, the student success center at Texas A&M International University, the library at Laredo College, a residential center in Edinburg and a road at Lake Casa Blanca International State Park.



**FAMILY IS THE FOUNDATION** of Senator Judith Zaffirini's lifetime of public service. What she wishes for her own beloved family is what she champions for all families. Hers includes her husband, Carlos Sr.; Carlos Jr. and his wife, Audrey; and her grandchildren, 2-year-old Asher Maxwell and Baby George William, who was born on July 15, 2019!