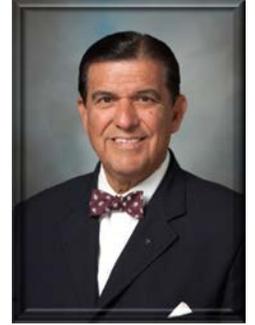




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PRESS RELEASE: Sen. Lucio Requests Assistance for Smaller, Border Communities

Smaller border cities shouldering daily international commute are critical to Texas' trade and commerce interests

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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AUSTIN, TX – Today, Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr., (D-Brownsville) released correspondence he wrote to Texas Governor Greg Abbott requesting increased resources for smaller communities in border counties, which shoulder daily international commutes from Mexico and are critical to Texas' trade and commerce interests.

In today's released correspondence, Sen. Lucio wrote, "Many of the smaller communities that I represent, those with less than 500,000 in population, continue to ask for greater guidance on the specific mechanism that our state has developed for them to receive critical assistance. These small community officials have shared with me how their tax base has been eroded due to the mandatory 'stay-at-home' orders, which you allowed to expire on April 30." Sen. Lucio went on to say, "As the criteria and distribution of the state's share of the \$11.2 billion continue to be refined, I respectfully implore you to consider investing an allocation on smaller cities and communities that are within the counties that are on the immediate border with Mexico. Again, as you aptly argued in March, this invisible disease 'knows no geographic and no jurisdictional boundaries,' and as such, this highly communicable disease puts a greater strain and poses a bigger threat to our smaller cities in Texas who face daily international commute from Mexico."

The federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provided Texas a total of \$11.2 billion. Big, urban jurisdictions (having populations more than 500,000) received direct allocations of relief funds from the federal government, which amount to more than \$3.2 billion out of the total CARES Act funding to Texas.

Senator Lucio went on to write, "Since these [border] communities have lower per capita income and tax bases than any other similarly populated areas in Texas, as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Intergovernmental Relations, I respectfully ask you to consider having a targeted allocation for these communities since they are so vital to the state's international commerce and trade interests with Texas' number one trade partner."

According to the Office of the United State's Trade Representative, Mexico is the state's largest trade partner. In fact, "Texas exported \$109.7 billion in goods to Mexico in 2018, representing 35 percent of the state's total goods exports."

Today's letter is a follow-up to a March 19, 2020 correspondence in which Sen. Lucio requested Governor Abbott to help "extend drive-thru testing, and increase the availability of tests, in the Lower Rio Grande Valley." In March, Sen. Lucio also wrote "in this region of South Texas, we have among some of the most vulnerable and uninsured populations in our state which lack a public hospital and a hospital district. Our constituents in our state's southernmost counties could be greatly protected by making more tests available. Being among Texas' highest population growth regions and being neighbors to the Country of Mexico, make the need for increased resources even more acute."

Sen. Lucio thanked Gov. Abbott and state agencies like the Texas Department of State Health Services, the Texas Division of Emergency Management, and the Texas Guard, in today's released letter, for helping increase testing and personal protection equipment in the Valley.

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Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. (D – Brownsville) represents Cameron, Hidalgo, Kenedy, Kleberg, and Willacy Counties. He is the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Intergovernmental Relations; Vice Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education; Member of the Senate Committees on State Affairs; Veteran Affairs & Border Security; and of the Select Committees on Redistricting; and, Texas Ports. He is member of the Sunset Advisory Commission and has been an ex-officio member of the DSHS Task Force of Border Public Health Officials since 2017. Elected in 1991, Lucio is third in seniority in the Texas Senate.