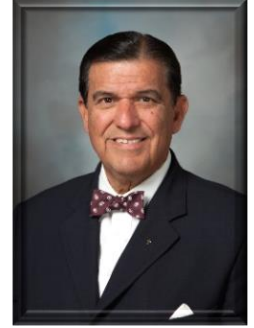




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Senator Lucio asks Governor Abbott for Increased Local Control & Resources for the Valley to Combat COVID-19
Request greater PPE, increased free testing, additional financial help, and more resources for Valley communities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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AUSTIN, TX – Today, Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr., (D-Brownsville) released a June 25 letter in which he requested Governor Greg Abbott to provide increased local control and greater resources to help the Rio Grande Valley combat the soring COVID-19 outbreak.

In his June 25 correspondence, Sen. Lucio wrote, “with a sense of urgency, on behalf of the good people of Senate District 27, I respectfully ask you to immediately direct our state to make meaningful steps to increase our local ability to curtail the spread of the deadly corona virus.”

In the wake of increased coronavirus cases, local officials across the state voiced concerns over the local control needed to better protect the health and safety of their residents. Locally, amid the rising tide of infections across the region, Valley officials expressed their urgent need for increased local authority for their community response to the surging COVID-19 outbreak.

Echoing the sentiments of his local officials, Sen. Lucio wrote, "for the sake of our constituents and families in our state, I respectfully request that you provide those in the frontlines who are fighting this life-altering virus greater resources and increased authority...it is our local officials -- our local health authorities and local health departments, along with their mayors and county judges -- who can best decide how to tailor the local response to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in their local communities." Sen. Lucio shared with Gov. Abbott, "as public servants, I hope that we see eye to eye that in order to protect the lives of our local constituency, our state government in Austin should strengthen their ability, rather than restrain it."

In reiterating his support of local officials he represents, Sen. Lucio declared, "I join Hidalgo County Judge Richard Cortez and Cameron County Judge Eddie Treviño -- along with our local mayors -- in conveying the urgent need for local control in our community's response to the ongoing public health crisis. Again, our local governments need to be able to exercise the local authority that our Texas statutes provide them to protect and save lives in communities within their jurisdiction."

The Rio Grande Valley, along with racial and ethnic minorities have disproportionately shouldered the negative consequences of the pandemic. Citing findings showing how the Valley's unemployment rate is significantly higher than the state's, Sen. Lucio requested critical assistance for his communities and urged Gov. Abbott to "strengthen the availability of state resources that help underserved communities in our state and maximize their ability to contain the virus."

"As our governor," Sen. Lucio continued, "I respectfully ask you to make available greater personal protection equipment (e.g., masks, gloves, sanitizer, etc.), increased free COVID-19 testing, additional financial assistance, and more resources to communities hardest hit and shouldering the brunt of the pandemic, especially to economically distressed communities and our vulnerable colonias in Rio Grande Valley."

In concluding his plea to provide communities he represents greater state assistance, Sen. Lucio reminded Gov. Abbott, "as I have shared with you in the past, our Rio Grande Valley's economy is dependent on cross-border commerce and trade. Clearly, our border, South Texas economy needs a carefully delineated, tailored response by our state. The emerging Hispanic population that we represent is in need for Texas to answer its call for help. Minority communities in our state, especially along our border, need your help in overcoming the pandemic, which has disproportionately affected them the most. For these reasons,

I respectfully ask you to provide targeted assistance to our Rio Grande Valley communities and strengthen the state's effort to assist them in keeping our families safe from the public health threat."

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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.