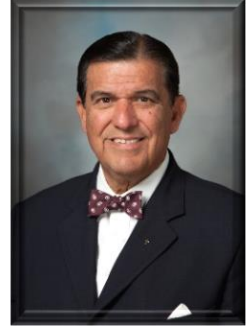




# STATE SENATOR EDDIE LUCIO, JR. DISTRICT 27



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## **Senator Lucio Requests Governor Abbott Continued Texas National Guard Help in Feeding Valley Families** *Governor's intervention requested to extend military assistance for Valley Food Banks*

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Saturday, July 4, 2020

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**AUSTIN, TX** – Today, Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. (D-Brownsville) released a July 2 letter where he joined Hidalgo County Judge Richard Cortez in asking Texas Governor Greg Abbott to intervene and halt the ending of Texas National Guard deployment in the Rio Grande Valley, which is set to expire on Wednesday, July 8, 2020.

In his letter to the Texas Governor, Senator Lucio wrote, "it is with a great sense of urgency that I write to you on behalf of the Rio Grande Valley constituents that you and I represent and respectfully ask for your help in providing much needed relief to vulnerable families in the Rio Grande Valley."

The help being referenced stems from a letter Judge Cortez sent Sen. Lucio in which the Judge stated, "I have been made aware that State officials have decided to end the deployment of Texas National Guard units helping with food bank distribution in Hidalgo County effective July 8, 2020. The timing is disconcerting, to say the least." Judge Cortez went on to say, "I, therefore, am seeking your help in convincing state officials, particularly Governor Greg Abbott to reconsider the decision to end the deployment of these forces that have become integral in providing much needed relief to our citizens."

Sen. Lucio in his July 2 letter informs Gov. Abbott "our constituents are hurting, living with food insecurity to a degree not experienced anywhere else in the state, and are in dire need of your assistance. As the devastating coronavirus outbreak expands at alarming levels throughout our Valley communities and creates insurmountable obstacles in the ability of our constituents to find the means to provide food for their families, I respectfully seek your leadership in ensuring our state does not allow these vulnerable Texans fall through the cracks."

Sen. Lucio reports to the governor "the COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc on our border economy that is greatly dependent on international trade and commerce. Regrettably, the debilitating public health crisis disproportionately affected and displaced our Valley constituents. Local and state media confirmed last week "Texans struggle to find work in the Rio Grande Valley, where unemployment has nearly tripled."

The case to help Valley families was made by Sen. Lucio when he explained, "regrettably, the alarming rise in COVID-19 cases has created daunting obstacles for our constituents to be able to feed their families. As great as our state is, for no fault of their own, these noteworthy Texans find themselves having to rely on our Food Banks to be able to provide nourishing meals for their loved ones."

The Rio Grande Valley Senator then requested Gov. Abbott "as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfold at alarming rates and Texans continue to lose their jobs at unprecedented levels, I implore you to intervene in this most perilous situation and help our Texas families in need before the deployment of this much needed resource ends on Wednesday, July 8."

Sen. Lucio restated his commitment to assist his constituents by concluding "with the welfare of the families that you and I represent in the Rio Grande Valley, I respectfully implore you to reconsider the state's decision to end the deployment of the National Guard, which has been the safety net for thousands of unemployed Texans and their families in the Rio Grande Valley.

As the public health crisis worsens by the day, now -- more than ever -- vulnerable Texans are in need of leadership to reassure them that their state will not turn its back on them during the most challenging of times in modern history."

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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.*