

THE SENATE OF TEXAS

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SENATOR
EDDIE LUCIO, JR.

August 6, 2020

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor, State of Texas
State Capitol, 2S.1
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Governor Abbott:

I write you on behalf of the Rio Grande Valley families that we represent and ask for your help in protecting their health and safety. Valley school administrators and educators have deep concerns with Attorney General Ken Paxton's recently issued school guidance. Unfortunately, it may force schools to open their doors when it is not yet safe to do so. The unintended consequence of prolonging the public health crisis, which has taken the lives and has hurt so many families we represent, may regrettably occur. I respectfully ask your help to prevent this alarming possibility.

The coronavirus' rapid spread has severely strained our local health care system. Thank you for visiting with our local officials and understanding the unfathomable health problems challenging our region. Our Cameron and Hidalgo constituents welcomed hearing that the Valley is Texas' top priority and that critical resources to help flatten the curve of cases will be coming. Although Attorney General Paxton's guidance is well intentioned, regrettably, it halts local public health efforts at supplementing the effectiveness of public resources you have committed to curtail the spread of COVID-19, especially among our children and staff in Valley public schools.

As a longtime proponent of local control, I agree that in ordinary times school boards and superintendents are best situated to determine the operations of schools. However, since the Valley is an epicenter of surging coronavirus cases, we are not living in ordinary times. In moments like these, the welfare of our children requires extraordinary action. You directing distance learning in March and preventing the dangerous spread of COVID-19 was a commendable directive. With hospitals beyond capacity, our constituents in the Rio Grande Valley need a similar extraordinary action. Having their best interests in mind, I respectfully implore your help to allow hotbed regions of community spread COVID-19 in Texas to protect the health and safety of students and staff with localized solutions that embrace distance learning, rather than fight them.



DISTRICT 27: CAMERON ★ HIDALGO ★ KENEDY ★ KLEBERG ★ WILLACY

COMMITTEES: CHAIR, INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS ★ VICE-CHAIR, EDUCATION ★ NATURAL RESOURCES & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ★
VETERAN AFFAIRS & MILITARY INSTALLATIONS ★ SUBCOMMITTEE ON BORDER SECURITY

Now that the Valley is unfortunately being challenged by two disasters, the pandemic and the destruction caused by Hurricane Hanna, I respectfully ask you to provide relief to our Rio Grande Valley families by safeguarding them from the unintended consequences of the Attorney General's public school guidance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eddie Lucio, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Eddie Lucio, Jr.
State Senator, District 27

