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State of the State

Austin – Sen. José Rodríguez, Chairman of the Senate Democratic Caucus, issued the following statement on the Governor's State of the State address:

The process of governance is largely made up of complex, and to the general public, mundane subjects. Making the trains run on time happens not because of a political speech, but because lawmakers come together and deliberate, debate, and ultimately, cooperate, and because dedicated public servants administer the execution of these decisions.

There is much in the governor's speech upon which I agree; the need for ethics reform, funding pre-k programs, public investment to spark business via enterprise funds, reforming CPS to ensure it works for the children in its care. I appreciate that he made two of those items priorities - ethics and CPS reform - by designating them as "emergency items," which means they will begin to move more quickly than other proposals.

But there is unfortunately too much that goes beyond what we can cooperate on, and that have little to do with the governance of the state to benefit all people. The so-called "sanctuary cities" emergency item is nothing but an attack on communities that have large immigrant populations; it is the very definition of the term "politics of fear" to use isolated, tragic events to target entire groups of people. Immigrants have a lower rate of crime than the general population, and we should be working with them to identify threats instead of forcing entire communities into the shadows under threat of deportation.

Our priority as a state should be to build upon the prosperity of our natural resources - primarily, the energy of our land and people - and set a foundation for a diversified economic future.

As Texans, we value everyone from all walks of life in our society, and we aim to ensure that every working Texan has a shot at the American Dream.

With the policies that are trickling down from Washington, which some of our state leaders seem to embrace, the middle class is being set against the poor, the newly arrived against the generationally landed. We cannot let that happen.

Our country was built by public investment in education. The gains made in my generation were fueled by hard work and educational opportunity. Whether it's making college accessible, learning a trade, or on-the-job training, investment in our people always pays off.

Let's not spend precious legislative time targeting immigrants, or LGBTQ, or any other minority group. Let everyone live their lives in pursuit of the American Dream.

José Rodríguez represents Texas Senate District 29, which includes the counties of El Paso, Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, and Presidio. He represents both urban and rural constituencies, and more than 350 miles of the Texas-Mexico border. Senator Rodríguez currently serves as the Chairman of the Texas Senate Democratic Caucus, and is a member of the Senate Committees on Agriculture, Water and Rural Affairs (Vice Chair); Natural Resources and Economic Development; Transportation, and Veterans Affairs and Border Security.