



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**CONTACT: Sito Negron**  
915.351-3500 (o) / 915.227.0360 (m)

## UPDATE on "Gifts for Good"

**El Paso** - The office of Senator José Rodríguez has exceeded its initial goal of 2,400 soccer balls donated for the "Gifts for Good" drive for the youth in the Tornillo detention center; the goal was based on the facility census, which at last report has grown to approximately 2,800 unaccompanied minors.

The official count from the online wish list is 2,550, and there are more dribbling in. The office expects to finish at about 2,700. Many people from the Paso del Norte and Trans-Pecos region, and from across America, have asked for an opportunity to show the youths that they are welcome by sending gifts, or by providing educational or social services. Unfortunately, the children are not allowed visitors, gifts of any kind, or even hugs.

For this holiday season, the Office of Senator José Rodríguez received permission from BCFS, the not-for-profit that is overseeing the facility, to provide a gift of a soccer ball. The office also received permission to collect cards bearing good tidings, following a prescribed message, and reached out to teachers and school districts. Thousands of cards have been either collected or are on their way, providing yet another measure of support so the youth, who are waiting for unification with sponsors, typically family members, know they are not alone.

"From the southern border to the northern border, and from sea to shining sea, America is showing these children that *this* is who we are," said Rodríguez. "It has been special to watch people of all religious and political beliefs step up in the spirit of giving. I am grateful to have the opportunity to facilitate this project, and look forward to the opportunity to do more for these children."

The gifts will be picked up at the Senator's office starting tomorrow, and be distributed to the children on Christmas Day.

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*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 Senate Democratic Caucus, and is a member of the Senate Committees on Natural Resources and Economic Development; Transportation; Veteran Affairs and Military Installations; and Agriculture, Water, and Rural Affairs.*