



APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

"It has been a busy week at the Texas Capitol! The House Appropriations Committee is in full swing, and I am proud to announce that I have been appointed as Vice Chair of the Subcommittee for Articles VI, VII & VIII, which focuses on Natural Resources, Business & Economic Development, and Regulatory Agencies. My role on this diverse subcommittee ensures that the Rio Grande Valley has a substantial voice in the budgeting process of essential state agencies, such as the Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Workforce Commission, and Texas Department of Agriculture. This week we heard testimony from state agencies concerning their budget requests for the next biennium. Next week we begin the markup process where we analyze each individual request, line-by-line, changing, amending, or acting on the request accordingly. Have a great weekend and God Bless."

STATE AGENCY SNAPSHOT

Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT): Presented the subcommittee with their proposed use of funds allocated to them by Proposition 1 (passed in Nov 14) and Motor Vehicle Sales and Use Tax; as well as options to increase funding towards transportation infrastructure and energy sector repairs.

Texas Department of Agriculture: Requested for the restoration of funds cut from the 2011 budget. The funds will be used in the areas of marketing, consumer protection, water & land management, rural affairs, and technology.

Border Security: Texas Department of Public Safety and the Texas Guard presented their 2016-17 structural changes named "Operation Strong Safety II". With the recent humanitarian crisis this past summer, border security is at the forefront of discussion this legislative session.



CAPITOL UPDATE

HB 1574 would allow the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to increase the number of baccalaureate programs certain authorized community colleges offer, currently capped at five. If passed, HB 1574 would provide an affordable degree program, whereby significantly improving the earning power of Texans.

WHY THIS MATTERS:

- The average bachelor degree salary in Texas is \$38,940 compared to \$26,714 for an associate degree.
- Obtaining a bachelor degree from a local community college would save approximately 43% in tuition fees when compared to attending a regional university.



On Monday, February 9th, [Representative Muñoz](#) was proud to recognize his hometown, the City of Palmview, with a House Resolution at the Texas Capitol.

CONSTITUENTS AT THE CAPITOL



[Representative Muñoz](#), along with the entire Valley delegation, was honored to recognize February 10, 2015, as Rio Grande Valley Day at the Texas Capitol. This unprecedented event brought together leaders and constituents from the RGV to showcase our unity and strength. Taking part in the event were Mayors Jim Darling from McAllen and Chris Boswell from Harlingen, UTRGV President Guy Bailey, STC President Shirley Reed, and Edinburg City Councilman J.R. Betancourt.

Together, we have accomplished great things for our region, such as the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, the newly established medical school, and SpaceX. Our next collaborative project is to assist South Texas College in creating a DPS training facility that will expand the career opportunities available to our citizens.