

# SERGIO MUÑOZ, JR.

*State Representative ★ District 36*

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS  
FALL 2013



State of Texas  
House of Representatives

**SERGIO MUÑOZ, JR.**  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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### Friends & Neighbors:

Many thanks for the opportunity to represent you in the Texas Legislature; it is indeed a privilege and an honor. As we worked through the regular and special sessions of the 83rd Legislature, we were pleased to learn that Governor Rick Perry has signed into law all of the legislation that I passed during the regular session, as well as other major bills that will benefit the Rio Grande Valley. Perry signed the balanced budget we crafted that restores a significant portion of the public education budget and increased funding for family planning & women's health programs with more than \$200 million, and SB 24, merging the Valley universities and creating our long-awaited medical school.

Other initiatives, such as my HB 474, will help usher in a new era of prosperity for the Valley by creating an overweight corridor devised to accommodate a surge of truck traffic from Mexico and the very welcome economic benefits that come along with it. The expansion and designation of I-69, increased electric generation and capacity, and an opportunity to provide water & wastewater services to underserved areas, are other examples and evidence that hard work, good public policy, and partnerships can raise our standard of living. Most recently, with my appointment to and work on the Select Committee on Transportation Funding, the Legislature was able to adopt a funding mechanism that could provide the transportation infrastructure that our communities need to continue developing and thriving.



*State Representative Muñoz and the Hidalgo County Legislative delegation address the media on the announcement of legislation which will merge our universities and create a medical school in the Rio Grande Valley.*

Please review our newsletter to learn more about our region and the legislation that we were able to pass for the people of the Valley. You will also find our "Constitutional Amendment Voter's Guide" intended to keep you informed about the very important proposed changes to our Texas Constitution. We are particularly pleased to see Propositions 7 & 8 on the ballot, which I authored and joint-authored, that would bring about efficiencies in certain city elections (Prop. 7) and allow for a Hospital District in Hidalgo County (Prop. 8).

Also, please note our contact information on the back page, and do not hesitate to contact our office with any of your concerns or questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sergio Muñoz, Jr.".

Sergio Muñoz, Jr.  
Texas State Representative, District 36

COMMITTEES: APPROPRIATIONS; INSURANCE; LOCAL & CONSENT CALENDARS;  
APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGULATORY AGENCIES



# LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS



*Conferring with Speaker Straus.*



*Taking Charge.*

## STATEWIDE IMPACT

Rep. Muñoz and the Valley delegation had remarkable success during the 83rd Legislative Session. Below are a few highlights:

**HB 5 – School Testing:** Reduces the number of standardized tests that burden our children and teachers from 15 to 5. Rep. Muñoz was proud to co-author this legislation because it gives more curriculum control to teachers and promotes student success and initiative.

**SB 7 – Medicaid Reform:** Will improve the delivery and quality of certain health and human services, including the delivery and quality of Medicaid acute care services and long-term services and supports.

**SB 1458 – TRS Reform:** Revises the current TRS law relating to contributions, benefits, and the administration of the system's programs. The bill makes TRS more sound, and increases the state's contribution to 6.8 percent.

**HB 4/SJR 1 – The Water Bills:** Because of the critical need to address our water needs sooner rather than later, the legislature acted to avoid the severe economic damage another drought would bring to the state. H.B. 4 lays the framework while S.J.R. 1 allows \$2 bil. of Rainy Day Fund money for water through a Constitutional Amendment and voter approval this November.

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## MUÑOZ BILLS

Below are examples of legislation that Rep. Muñoz was able to pass that will benefit our local economy and our communities:

**HB 8 – Human Trafficking:** Joint-authored this bill to provide protection for the victims of Human Trafficking, most often women, and for punishing the offenders.

**SB 24 – University Merger/RGV Medical School:** Merging the Valley's University of Texas institutions and creating our long-awaited medical school. SB 24 will benefit our communities in a variety of ways... educating our students, providing health care and medical research, creating jobs, and benefiting a long list of industries that will support the institution.

**HB 170 – Women's Health:** Co-authored this measure allowing women to schedule mammograms more efficiently and with a doctor of their choosing.

**HB 474 – Overweight Truck Corridor:** Creates an overweight corridor that will allow trucks to proceed to Texas before having to split their loads, saving time and money, while reducing the number of trucks on the road. Rep. Muñoz was eager to work with a coalition of economic development professionals, the produce industry, our cities, and bridge directors on the measure, and the result was a bill that will lead to hundreds of jobs and economic efficiencies that will benefit South Texas. With implementation of the bill, Rep. Muñoz has signaled to a broad set of stakeholders that he believes in commerce, job creation, and making business more efficient and profitable for all Texans.

**HB 1372/HJR 87 – City Vacancies:** These common sense bills allow an option to fill certain city council vacancies by appointment. The change will allow cities an alternative to the expensive process of holding a special election. The provision is contingent upon passage of a Constitutional amendment this November.

**HB 2094 – Roadside Vendors:** This is a bill that was vetoed by Gov. Perry in 2011, but after working closely with the Governor during the interim, it has now been signed into law. This bill allows Hidalgo County to regulate certain roadside vendor sales in the unincorporated area of the county. The intent of the bill is to improve health and safety conditions in and around areas where vendors encroach on roadways and legitimate business.

**HB 3674 – Historic Courthouses:** Would allow a limited number of cities to qualify for the Historic Courthouse Preservation and Maintenance Programs, including the 1886 Hidalgo County Courthouse in Hidalgo.

**HCR 219 – Public Safety Excellence:** Supports the establishment of the Regional Center for Public Safety Excellence in Pharr that will be administered by South Texas College. The center will develop initial and continuing education and training, credit of which could be used towards an Associate of Applied Science Degree. The Center will provide the necessary tools to increase the level of professionalism that our Valley deserves and expects of its law enforcement community.





# TEXAS STATE GOVERNMENT BUDGET

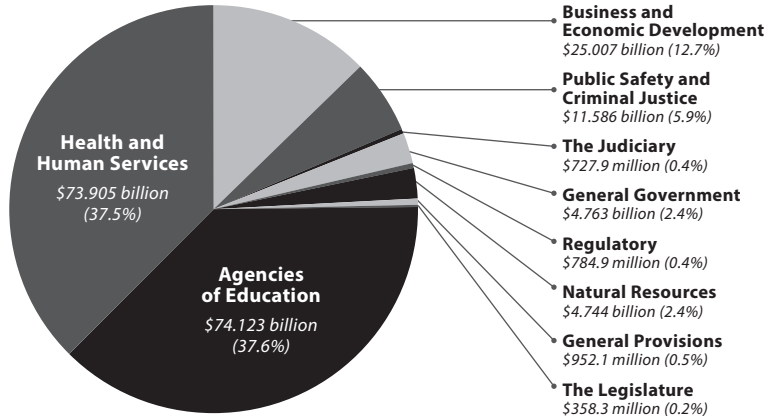


## ★ ALL-FUNDS Budget ★ Total: \$196.951 Billion

Notes:

1. Excludes Interagency Contracts
2. Biennial change and percentage change are calculated on actual amounts before rounding. Therefore, figure totals may not sum due to rounding.

Figures provided by Legislative Budget Board



Rep. Muñoz is very pleased to report positive news on the budget, and is very proud to have been appointed to the powerful House Appropriations Committee to help craft a balanced budget that restored billions of dollars to critical programs and services that benefit our businesses, schools, and people.

SB 1 - The General Appropriations Bill, totals \$197.0 billion and represents a \$7.1 billion, or 3.7%, increase from the 2012–13 budget (\$189.9 billion). Here are a few HIGHLIGHTS:

**Public Education:** Nearly \$4 billion was restored to the public education budget from the cuts made last session. Appropriations for the Foundation School Program (FSP) fully fund student enrollment growth and provide for \$3.2 billion in entitlement increases, including \$1.1 billion to eliminate the Regular Program Adjustment and \$2.1 billion for increases to the basic allotment and reductions to hold harmless.

Other increases include additional funding for pre-Kindergarten grants (\$30.0 million), the Student Success Initiative (\$14.0 million) Communities in Schools (\$11.5 million), Adult Basic Education (\$5.0 million), and Teach for America (\$4.0 million) — In total, \$40.2 billion in All Funds are provided for the FSP.

**Higher Education:** Supported by \$16.6 billion in All Funds, this budget includes increases for formula funding, Institutional enhancement funding, funding for residency and graduate medical education, and for Higher Education Group Insurance contributions.

... And one of Rep. Muñoz' favorite programs, the TEXAS Grants program increased by \$135.1 million. Since its inception in 1999, the Towards EXcellence, Access and Success program has succeeded by helping more than 275,000 students go to college.



Rep. Muñoz at work with Chairwoman Senfronia Thompson. The two collaborated on human trafficking legislation, budget issues, and other legislative measures.

**Health & Human Services:** \$58.2 billion is provided for the Texas Medicaid program. Funding levels account for projected caseload growth and include \$1.7 billion for anticipated cost growth. Also included in the funding levels is \$574.1 million for additional community-based long-term care services and \$246.6 million for nursing facility provider rate increases.

**Women's Health & Family Planning:** Rep. Muñoz was particularly pleased to provide increased appropriations for programs to benefit women's and family health care programs:

- Allocated an additional \$100 million for providing primary health care services to women with the intent that the services include: preventative health screening, such as, breast and cervical cancer screening, diabetes, cholesterol, hypertension, and STD-HIV screenings; family planning services including contraception, perinatal services, and dental services;
- Helped to fund family planning services with \$32 million in GR, when federal funding for the program was not realized; and
- Supported and voted to continue the Texas Women's Health Program with \$71 million of GR funding.

**Transportation:** SB 1 provides \$17.4 billion for the transportation budget... the amount includes \$8.2 billion for maintenance and preservation, an increase of \$1.5 billion from 2012–13; \$6.7 billion for construction and highway improvements (an increase of \$1.2 billion); \$1.6 billion for transportation system planning, design, and management; and \$0.9 billion for right-of-way acquisition (a decrease of \$1.1 billion).

Most recently, with Rep. Muñoz' appointment to the Select Committee on Transportation Funding, the Legislature adopted a consensus funding solution for the state's aging transportation infrastructure. A funding mechanism was developed that will allocate an estimated \$1.2 billion without raising taxes or fees. SJR 1 and HB 1, combine to send a Constitutional Amendment to the voters in November 2014 to approve use of revenue that would otherwise go to the Rainy Day Fund... while preserving a sufficient balance in the Rainy Day Fund.

**Natural Resources:** SB 1 also provides for badly needed resources to our State Parks and natural resources agencies, and includes \$6 million for debt service associated with Economically Disadvantaged Assistance Program grants which will allow the Water Development Board to issue \$50 million in additional bonds to fund waste water projects intended to benefit our South Texas communities.

And finally, an increase of \$1.4 million in the Surplus Ag Grant to benefit Food Banks. This measure could significantly increase the amount of food distributed by the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley.



# WELCOME TO THE CAPITOL



*Pictured with Rep. Muñoz are Governor Perry, Mayor Beto Salinas and other city leaders on the occasion of Mission Day at the Capitol.*



*Rep. Muñoz hosts the young professionals of Leadership Mission at the Capitol.*

During the 83rd Legislative Session, Rep. Muñoz was able to welcome hundreds of his supporters and constituents at the Texas Capitol. Rep. Muñoz was proud to recognize several constituents with House Resolutions, including Dr. Fred Farias III of McAllen on his being named President-Elect of the Texas Optometric Association, Jose Montalvo of Palmview for having received the high honor of All State tuba player four consecutive years and achieving entry into the Texas All-State 5A Concert Band, and the 2013 Leadership Mission delegation.

Rep. Muñoz was also proud to honor South Texas College on the House Floor as the winner of the fifth annual Leah Meyer Austin Award. Along with this prestigious recognition, the college will receive \$25,000 to support the tremendous success of its student programs.

Rep. Muñoz also helped to host the cities of Mission and McAllen to the Capitol on the occasion of their Capitol Days visits, whereby the cities embark on the Capitol to advocate for important issues impacting the people they represent, and was delighted to host Palmview officials and residents for the first-ever Palmview Day at the Capitol.

Most significantly, Rep. Muñoz received hundreds of young visitors in his Capitol office. These schoolchildren touched our hearts as they advocated for better schools, for health and human services such as Autism and awareness of Williams Syndrome, and a host of other issues. Members of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Rio Grande Valley, our local school districts and charter schools, the Lone Star Leadership Academy, and the U.S. Border Patrol's "Head of the Class" recipients were among the visitors.

Rep. Muñoz is grateful for the support and insight that these constituents brought with them and welcomes any of his constituents to visit our Capitol or District Offices at any time. Please see our contact information and addresses on the back of this newsletter.



## STATE SYMBOLS



### Can You Match the State Symbols?

- |                             |                                       |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. The State Bird           | a. Mexican Free-Tailed Bat            |
| 2. The State Dinosaur       | b. Chili con Carne                    |
| 3. The State Flower         | c. Armadillo                          |
| 4. The State Fruit          | d. Jalapeño                           |
| 5. The State Insect         | e. Chuck Wagon                        |
| 6. The State Motto          | f. Brachiosaur Sauropod, Pleurocoelus |
| 7. The State Pepper         | g. Bolo                               |
| 8. The State Reptile        | h. Guadalupe Bass                     |
| 9. The State Tie            | i. The Lone Star State                |
| 10. The State Tree          | j. Tortilla Chips and Salsa           |
| 11. The State Vehicle       | k. Texas Blue Topaz                   |
| 12. The State Song          | l. Mockingbird                        |
| 13. The State Amphibian     | m. Prickly Pear Cactus                |
| 14. The State Snack         | n. Texas, Our Texas                   |
| 15. The State Plant         | o. Texas Toad                         |
| 16. The State Dish          | p. Horned Lizard                      |
| 17. The State Gem           | q. Friendship                         |
| 18. The State Mammal        | r. Bluebonnet                         |
| 19. The State Flying Mammal | s. Pecan Tree                         |
| 20. The State Nickname      | t. Texas Red Grapefruit               |
| 21. The State Fish          | u. Monarch Butterfly                  |



in this issue  
**Constitutional  
 Amendment  
 Voter's Guide**

cut out and take with you to the polls

**Early Voting:**  
**Monday, October 21<sup>st</sup>**  
 through  
**Friday, November 1<sup>st</sup>**

**Election Day: Tuesday, November 5<sup>th</sup>**

★ CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS ★

— PLEASE CUT OUT THIS ELECTION-DAY AID & TAKE WITH YOU TO VOTE —  
 State law allows you to take this information into the polls.  
 Please feel free to cut out this practice ballot and take it with you to vote.

Detailed arguments for and against the constitutional amendments on the November 5, 2013 ballot are available online:  
<http://www.hro.house.state.tx.us/pdf/focus/amend83.pdf>

<input type="checkbox"/> FOR	<input type="checkbox"/> AGAINST	<b>Amendment No.1 (H.J.R. 62)</b> authorizes the legislature to provide for an exemption from ad valorem taxation of all or part of the market value of the residence homestead of the surviving spouse of a member of the armed services of the United States who is killed in action.
<input type="checkbox"/> FOR	<input type="checkbox"/> AGAINST	<b>Amendment No.2 (H.J.R. 79)</b> eliminates an obsolete requirement for a State Medical Education Board and a State Medical Education Fund, neither of which is operational.
<input type="checkbox"/> FOR	<input type="checkbox"/> AGAINST	<b>Amendment No.3 (H.J.R. 133)</b> authorizes a political subdivision of this state to extend the number of days that aircraft parts that are exempt from ad valorem taxation due to their location in this state for a temporary period may be located in this state for purposes of qualifying for the tax exemption.
<input type="checkbox"/> FOR	<input type="checkbox"/> AGAINST	<b>Amendment No.4 (H.J.R. 24)</b> authorizes the legislature to provide for an exemption from ad valorem taxation of part of the market value of the residence homestead of a partially disabled veteran or the surviving spouse of a partially disabled veteran if the residence homestead was donated to the disabled veteran by a charitable organization.
<input type="checkbox"/> FOR	<input type="checkbox"/> AGAINST	<b>Amendment No.5 (S.J.R. 18)</b> authorizes the making of a reverse mortgage loan for the purchase of homestead property and to amend lender disclosures and other requirements in connection with a reverse mortgage loan.
<input type="checkbox"/> FOR	<input type="checkbox"/> AGAINST	<b>Amendment No.6 (S.J.R. 1)</b> provides for the creation of the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas and the State Water Implementation Revenue Fund for Texas to assist in the financing of priority projects in the state water plan to ensure the availability of adequate water resources.
<input type="checkbox"/> FOR	<input type="checkbox"/> AGAINST	<b>Amendment No.7 (H.J.R. 87)</b> authorizes a home rule municipality to provide in its charter the procedure to fill a vacancy on its governing body for which the unexpired term is 12 months or less.
<input type="checkbox"/> FOR	<input type="checkbox"/> AGAINST	<b>Amendment No.8 (H.J.R. 147 &amp; S.J.R. 54)</b> repeals Section 7, Article IX, Texas Constitution, which relates to the creation of a hospital district in Hidalgo County.
<input type="checkbox"/> FOR	<input type="checkbox"/> AGAINST	<b>Amendment No.9 (S.J.R. 42)</b> relates to expanding the types of sanctions that may be assessed against a judge or justice following a formal proceeding instituted by the State Commission on Judicial Conduct.







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★ **IMPORTANT STATE AGENCIES** ★

Aging and Disability Services, Tx. Dept. of .....	800-458-9858	State Bar of Texas .....	800-204-2222
Agriculture, Tx. Dept. of .....	800-835-5832	Lawyer Referral Service .....	800-252-9690
Attorney General, Office of .....	800-252-8011	Texas Equal Access to Justice .....	800-252-3401
Child Support .....	800-252-8014	Texas Lawyer's Assistance Program .....	800-343-8527
Consumer Protection .....	800-621-0508	State Health Services, Tx. Dept. of .....	888-963-7111
Crime Victims .....	800-983-9933	Tx. Commission Environmental Quality .....	800-687-4040
Comptroller of Public Accounts .....	800-531-5441	Tx Education Agency .....	512-463-9734
Criminal Justice, Dept. of .....	512-463-9776	Tx Secretary of State .....	512-463-5555
Family and Protective Services, Dept. of .....	512-438-4800	Tx Water Development Board .....	800-973-7252
Texas Abuse/Neglect Hotline .....	800-252-5400	Tx Workforce Commission .....	512-463-2222
Texas Youth Hotline .....	800-989-6884	Transportation, Tx. Dept. of .....	800-558-9368
Governors Citizens Assistance Hotline .....	800-843-5789	Senator John Cornyn .....	956-423-0162
Housing & Community Affairs, Tx. Dept. of .....	800-525-0657	Senator Ted Cruz.....	210-340-2885
Insurance, Tx. Dept. of .....	800-578-4677	Congressman Ruben Hinojosa .....	956-682-5545
Licensing and Regulation, Dept. of .....	800-803-9202	Congressman Henry Cuellar .....	956-424-3942
Motor Vehicles, Tx. Dept. of .....	888-368-4689	State Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa .....	956-972-1841
Public Safety, Tx. Dept. of .....	512-424-2000	State Senator Eddie Lucio Jr. ....	956-968-9927
Public Utility Commission of Texas .....	888-782-8477		

