



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

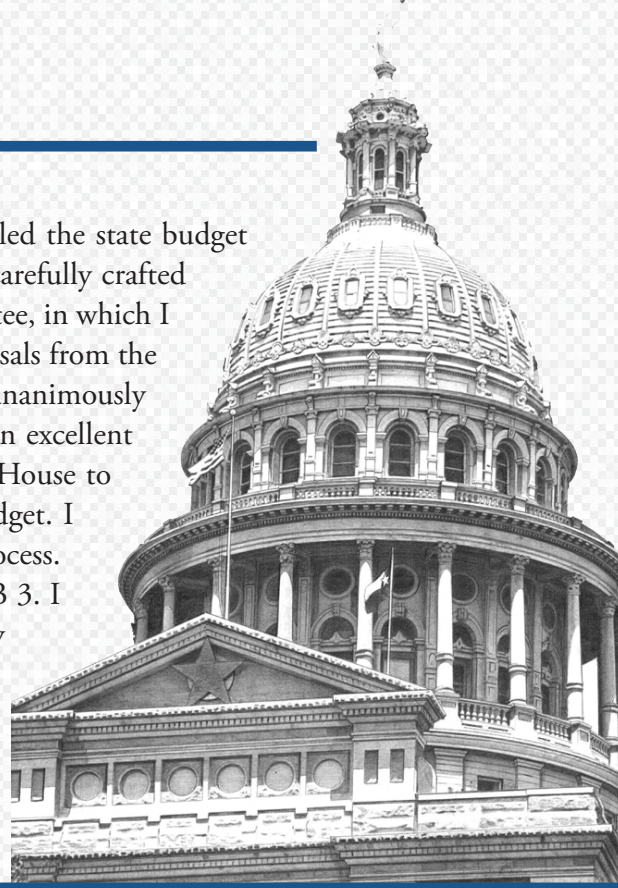
SERGI MUÑOZ JR

State Representative District 36

86TH SESSION | #4 | APRIL 8, 2019

A MESSAGE FROM REPRESENTATIVE MUÑOZ

Throughout the past two weeks in the legislature, we tackled the state budget for the upcoming biennium. This budget proposal was carefully crafted in the past several months in the Appropriations Committee, in which I proudly serve, and amended on the Floor with amendment proposals from the entire body. After a 14-hour debate, my colleagues and I voted unanimously to move forward with a \$251 billion budget that I believe does an excellent job of addressing the needs of the state. The next step is for the House to work with the Senate on any differences before finalizing the budget. I will keep you updated on its progress as it moves through the process. Another key issue that we took on was school finance reform, HB 3. I am proud of this bill that my colleagues and I passed which greatly improves the current finance system. Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter, as always, I welcome your concerns and suggestions. God Bless!



DISTRICT 36 VISITORS AT THE TEXAS CAPITOL

I am grateful to have the opportunity to welcome constituents to Texas Capitol! (1) It was an honor to present Mr. Patricio A. Gonzalez of Pharr with a House Resolution in celebration of his 95th birthday, and for his service and community involvement. (2) I was happy to meet with constituents, advocates, and these incredible children from the Rio Grande Valley Down Syndrome Association as they joined organizations from throughout the state at the Texas Capitol to raise awareness about issues that impact people with Down Syndrome. (3) & (4) Mission and McAllen Firefighters visited the Capitol for Texas Firefighter Day! (5) I met with advocates from the Special Olympics and discussed issues important to the organization. (6) Students from La Joya ISD visited the Capitol in honor of La Joya and La Joya ISD Day!



TEXAS HOUSE PASSES BUDGET HB 1

The Texas House of Representatives voted unanimously to adopt House Bill 1, the state budget for the 2020-2021 biennium.

“This budget was carefully crafted throughout the past couple of months in the Appropriations committee in which I proudly serve, and was adjusted through 300 proposed amendments from the entire body,” said Representative Muñoz. “In the end, I was proud to vote in favor of a budget that makes significant investments in critical areas of the State.”

Following this vote, HB 1 heads to the Senate. When the Senate passes their version, the two chambers will negotiate any differences in a conference committee and propose a final budget plan for each chamber's approval.

The adopted version of HB 1 is a \$251 billion budget which includes:

Increased Funding for our Students:

- \$54.5 million for the Safe and Healthy Schools Initiative.
- \$2.3 billion has been funded for students with disabilities.
- \$10 million was contributed for grants for students with autism and another \$10 million for grants for students with dyslexia.
- \$866.4 million for Texas Grants.
- \$95.9 million was contributed to Texas Equalization Opportunity Grants for students in good academic standing attending junior and community colleges.

Mental health Funding

- \$31.1 million to expand mental health capacity at Local Mental Health and Behavioral Health Authorities.
- \$11.8 million was also provided to increase services in the Children's Community Mental Health program.

Women's Health Funding:

- Increased funding from \$87.9 million to \$366.9 million for women's health programs that provide family planning services (FPL) and annual exams to women ages 18 to 44 that do not qualify for Medicaid.
- \$7 million contingent on legislation to address the maternal mortality and morbidity crisis through the Texas Alliance for Innovation in Maternal Health (Texas AIM).

Sexual Assault Victims Funding:

- \$10 million for CAC and CASA programs for child victims of sexual assault. \$10 million for Basic Civil Legal Services for Victims of Sexual Assault.
- \$20 million to provide grants to sexual assault forensic exam-ready facilities.

State Employee Retirement System Contributions:

- \$943 million to the ERS retirement program.

Other Notable Funding:

- \$100 million for disaster grants.
- \$251.8 million for EMS and Trauma Care Systems.
- \$1.7 billion in All Funds for childcare services provided to low-income families and foster care and protective service populations.
- \$7.8 million total for a rate increase for the home-delivered meal program.

SCHOOL FINANCE REFORM BILL HB 3

The Texas House of Representatives debated and passed an overhaul to the school finance system. The bill fundamentally transforms the way Texas invests in its students and makes school funding formulas more efficient and equitable. HB 3 greatly improves the current school finance system to accelerate student achievement and prioritize teacher quality.

House Bill 3 sets forth the following provisions:

- Requires available state funds to be used before requesting locally generated revenue.
- Invests \$9 billion in classrooms; \$6.3 billion towards public education and \$2.7 billion towards property tax reduction over the biennium.
- Allots for approximately \$890 per pupil in additional funding.
- Creates an Early Education Allotment that allows districts to invest in Full-Day Pre-K.
- Permanently lowers school district property tax rates.
- Creates a Bilingual Allotment.
- Closes the "equity gap" by approximately \$200 in the first year of the biennium.
- Increases the Basic Allotment from \$5,140 to \$6,030, which increases the amount of money guaranteed for each student.

"I am confident that HB 3 greatly improves the current school finance system and delivers in its promises to our public schools. The measure gives school districts the discretion to appropriate resources where they see fit and prioritizes students with the highest needs," said Rep. Muñoz.

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL SB 500

Aside from HB 1, the Texas House also passed SB 500, the supplemental appropriations bill (SB 500) needed to fund services for the remainder of Fiscal year 2019. Key items in SB 500 include:

- \$4.3 billion from the "Rainy Day" fund, has been allocated for Hurricane Harvey related expenditures.
- \$2,100,000,000 from General Revenue
- \$2,300,000,000 from FF for Medicaid client services shortfall.
- \$684,000,000 from General Revenue for state contribution to the Teacher Retirement System pension trust account to provide a one-time "13th check" for retired educators.