



STATE REPRESENTATIVE OSCAR LONGORIA

*Working for an even
stronger South Texas
we can all be proud of.*



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Dear Friends:

It is an honor and a privilege to represent you, the constituents of House District 35, and all the great people of Texas. Thank you for your support and for trusting me, as I work diligently to help improve our communities—making Texas a better place to live for all!

During the 140 days of session, we worked tirelessly to tackle many issues. The Rio Grande Valley Legislative Delegation came off of a historic session, as we continued to collaborate and share the needs of our South Texas region with our fellow legislators from other parts of Texas. We were once again able to work together to better the Rio Grande Valley.

This session saw more funding for the expansion of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and its Medical School, funding for more transportation infrastructure, an increase of \$1.5 billion to public education funding, an investment in high quality pre-kindergarten programs, funding for our Veterans related to health and higher educational opportunities, \$4 billion in tax relief, and funding for more DPS officers to help ease criminal activity along the border region.

Your input via telephone calls, letters, emails and office visits are greatly appreciated, as it helps my office stay apprised of your interests and concerns. Please continue sending your comments and suggestions on issues that are important to you.

In this newsletter, you will find highlights of some of our major legislative achievements, including new laws that are now in effect. It is my hope that you will find this most helpful in understanding the accomplishments we made during the 84th Legislative Session.

I am extremely grateful for your confidence and continued support to allow me to serve you in the Texas House of Representatives.

Your Public Servant for a Better Texas,

Oscar Longoria
State Representative



Rep. Longoria announcing H.B. 12 alongside Legislators at the Border Security Press Conference at the Capitol.



EDUCATION: CREATING OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

EXPANSION OF UTRGV AND MEDICAL SCHOOL

This fall, we witnessed the first inaugural classes at the new University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV), an exciting time for our students and our local communities. I am proud to say, that this session, my colleagues and I approved \$30 million for UTRGV and the new medical school--making UTRGV the second highest funded university within the University of Texas System! Recognizing that healthcare is an important industry, not only in the Rio Grande Valley, but all over the state, we also funded a \$275 million endowment for Graduate Medical Education (GME), which will help medical schools throughout the state create an additional 200 residency slots over the next two years. The main focus of this investment will also help us train and retain doctors, which will be a big incentive for our medical students to not only train in the Rio Grande Valley, but stay and practice here as well. Funding for two new buildings at UTRGV were also approved by the 84th Legislature for Texas Revenue Bond funding:

- A 77,000-gross-square-foot, \$36.7 million Interdisciplinary Engineering and Academic Studies Building approved for the Edinburg campus will include a 250-seat lecture auditorium, two 150-seat lecture halls, five 60-seat classrooms, and offices. The project also will include an outdoor pavilion for use as a gathering or study space.
- The other building, a 67,400-gross-square-foot, \$36.4 million multipurpose academic center in Brownsville, will add needed classrooms and labs for physics, general purpose classrooms and computer labs.



The first Tuesday of every month, doctors gather at the capitol to discuss their priorities for the ongoing legislative session. Representative Longoria met with constituents Dr. Rudy Alvarez and Dr. Linda Villarreal to discuss the Medicaid-to-Medicare Parity Payments, also participating in the meeting was Michelle Romero from the Texas Medical Association.

EXPANDING PRE-K

H.B. 4 creates a new high-quality prekindergarten (pre-K) grant program, beginning with the 2015-16 school year. In addition to existing half-day funding under the Foundation School Program for eligible students, the bill directs the commissioner of education to make awards to school districts and charter schools that meet all high-quality prekindergarten standards. A student qualifies for the grant funding if the student is 4 years old on September 1 of the year the student begins the program and if the student meets certain eligibility requirements.

COLLEGE READINESS

H.B. 18 requires that all students in grade 7 or 8 receive instruction in developing their high school graduation plans and preparing for college or career. It establishes postsecondary and career counseling academies for middle and high school counselors and advisors. The bill also allows high school students to enroll in an unlimited number of dual credit courses. It increases the number of districts and charter schools that can participate in the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium.



Rep. Longoria meets with students from La Joya ISD's STC Dual Enrollment Government classes, who visited the Capitol to see first-hand how the Texas Legislature works.

SAFE GUARDING OUR TEACHERS' HEALTH CARE

The Texas Legislature passed a supplemental budget that includes \$768 million for the Teacher Retirement System, (TRS) Care Program. This additional funding is expected to keep the health care program for retired teachers sound through the (2016-2017) biennium. It is imperative that we find a solid solution to fund the program, so that we can take care of our retired teachers who have done so much for our students.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 84TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION

WORKING FOR YOU: MY LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

INCREASED FUNDING TO PROSECUTE BORDER CRIMES (H.B. 12)

Working alongside House Leadership, including Governor Abbott's team, Speaker Straus, Rep. Dennis Bonnen, and Rep. Senfronia Thompson, I was able to pass H.B. 12, a bi-partisan effort, which codifies the Border Prosecution Unit (BPU). This legislation is important because it places the Border Prosecution Unit into statute, which better allows local officials to prosecute border related crimes, such as: drug smuggling, murder, kidnapping, extortion, money laundering and human trafficking.

The Border Prosecution Unit is vital in helping prosecutors screen cases, secure indictments and bring accused criminals to trial. This bill will give our prosecutors the resources and support they need to ensure that those who enslave, exploit and endanger others are put behind bars where they belong.



Rep. Longoria was presented with the 2015 "Border Champion" Award by the Texas District & County Attorneys Association for his work alongside the Border Prosecution Unit and Senator Hinojosa this legislative session on House Bill 12.

EXPANDING COLLEGE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DELTA

H.B. 382 (Joint Author with Rep. Terry Canales) - This bill, which was joint authored with Rep. Terry Canales, allows STC to partner with the Edcouch-Elsa School District to create an extension facility in the area. This will provide tremendous educational opportunities to the many communities and students who live in the surrounding area.

ENDING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

H.B. 10 (Joint Author w/ Rep. Senfronia Thompson) - This bill seeks to prevent and ultimately eliminate human trafficking by enacting the recommendations made by the task force in the 2014 Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force Report. It also requires the governor to establish the Child Sex Trafficking Prevention Unit within the criminal justice division in the governor's office and to appoint a director for the unit.



Rep. Longoria pictured with Representatives Senfronia Thompson (Houston) and Toni Rose (Dallas) during the Joint Interim Committee to Study Human Trafficking. Rep. Longoria hosted the committee for a hearing in District 35, helping Texas Legislators understand the impact of Human Trafficking in the Rio Grande Valley.



LEGISLATION AFFECTING ALL TEXANS

BORDER SECURITY

This session saw a significant increase in funding towards border security, most of which is directed to South Texas. The legislature approved appropriations for the recruitment and training of 250 DPS troopers, the creation of the Texas Transnational Intelligence Center, which will be a collaborative effort between state and local law enforcement agencies to ensure that accurate and up-to-date information is being disseminated between all agencies, and \$2 million was appropriated for the development of a DPS training facility in the Rio Grande Valley.

TAKING CARE OF OUR VETERANS

The Legislature made significant investments in our Veterans this session, including:

- **H.B. 3404** allows the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) in coordination with a university that has expertise in behavioral health or PTSD to conduct a study on the benefits of providing integrated care to veterans with PTSD.

- **HB 2012** provides relief from license application and exam fees for military members or their spouse, if their military service, training, education, or a license issued by another jurisdiction substantially meets all Texas occupational licensing requirements. Waiving these fees will ease the difficulties of reentering the workforce for returning veterans and their spouses.

- **HB 2111** provides tax relief for newly created, veteran owned businesses by exempting those from the Texas Franchise Tax and state business registration fees for the first five years the business is in operation. Texas exempts a number of enterprises such as charities, homeowners associations, educational organizations, and religious organizations; however, prior to this measure, there were no franchise tax exemptions or deductions related to veterans.



Rep. Longoria meets with Veterans in Hidalgo County.

REGULATION OF E-CIGARETTES

This session, Texas legislators voted to regulate the sale of e-cigarettes--the fast growing nicotine product comparable to cigarettes. Starting Oct. 1, the nicotine-laced vapor of e-cigarettes will be legally off-limits for Texans younger than 18. The rules on tobacco cigarettes now apply to all e-cigarettes (vapor products), including: barring the sale of e-cigarettes to minors and the prohibition of e-cigarette use on public school campuses and at school functions.

OPEN CARRY

Beginning January 1, 2016, Texans with a concealed handgun license will be able to openly carry their gun in a hip or shoulder holster. However, businesses will still have the option to prohibit guns on their property.

CAMPUS CARRY

Beginning August 1, 2016, concealed handgun licensees will be able to openly carry on college campuses. However, university presidents will be able to declare certain areas on campus off-limits for gun safety reasons. The law does not apply to private universities, such as Rice University or St. Mary's University, which are exempted from the law and will continue to be gun-free.

"PICK-A-PAL"

HB 2150 abolishes Texas' "pick-a-pal" grand jury selection method and replaces it with the random selection method, like the one used to pick Texans for jury duty.

"RIGHT TO TRY"

HB 21—The Texas Right To Try Act—allows doctors to prescribe treatments to the terminally ill that are being used in clinical trials but are not yet on pharmacy shelves. Right To Try expands access to potentially life-saving treatments years before patients would normally be able to access them.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS:

Overall, the Texas Legislature passed a \$209.4 billion budget for the next two years without using any money reserved in the Rainy Day Fund.

Public Education: Fully funds our classroom enrollment growth and adds an additional \$1.5 billion to public education funding, plus an additional \$130 million for pre-k-Higher

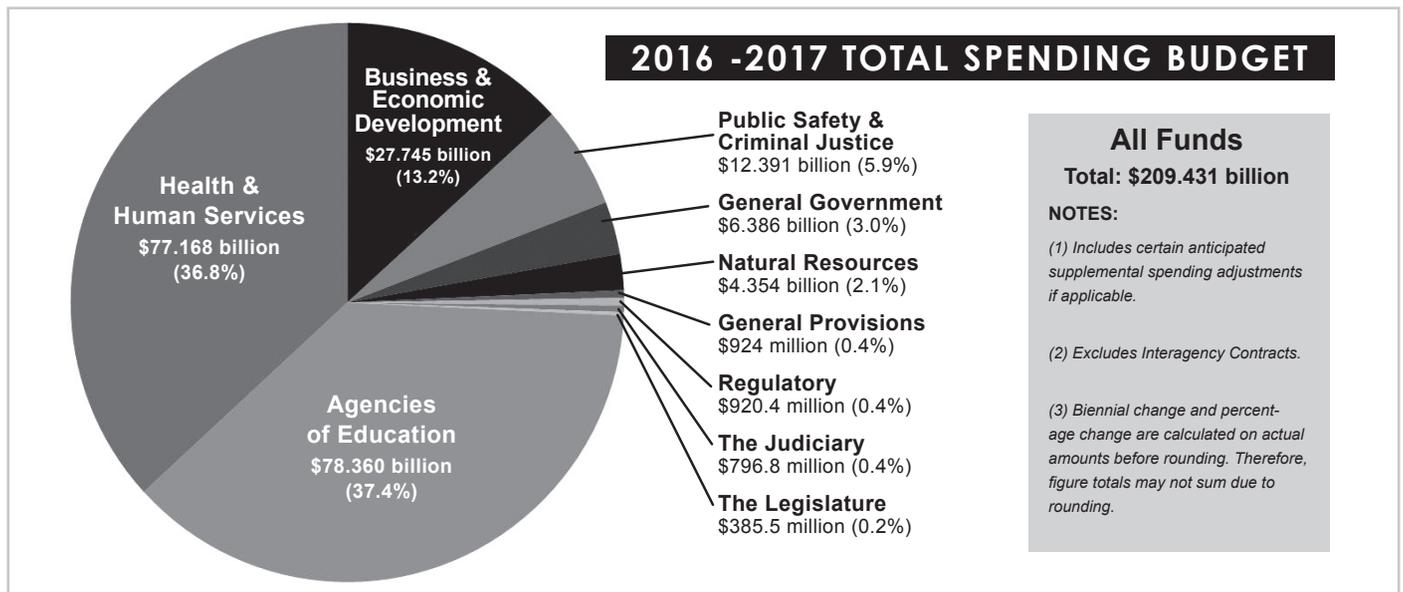
HHSC Re-Design: Three women's health services were consolidated to one and placed under HHSC. It is funded at \$100 million.

Tax Relief: A 3.8 billion tax cut compromise was reached, and approved by voters on November 3rd, which will save the average Texas homeowner more than \$120 a year in property taxes.

Transportation: Ensures all of the money in the State Highway Fund will be used for transportation instead of using some of those dollars for other programs, effectively increasing transportation funding by more than \$1 billion for each biennium.

Border Security: Provides \$840 million for border security. Allows for hiring of 250 new Department of Public Safety troopers.

Protecting Children: Funding for Child Protective Services increased to address serious challenges in protecting abused children.



★ ABOUT YOUR REPRESENTATIVE ★

Oscar Longoria is the State Representative for Texas House District 35, serving a second term in office. HD 35 encompasses both Hidalgo and Cameron Counties and includes the cities/towns of: La Joya, Sullivan City, Peñitas, Alton, Edinburg, Monte Alto, Edcouch, La Villa, Mercedes, Weslaco, Santa Rosa, Primera, Palm Valley, Combes, Harlingen, and La Feria.

Born in Mission and raised in South Texas, Representative Longoria is a product of the La Joya Independent School District. He attended South Texas College for two years before transferring to the University of Texas at Austin, where he graduated in 2003 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Communication Studies; and in 2007 graduated with a Doctorate of Jurisprudence from the University Of Texas School Of Law. Representative Longoria has been practicing law for over eight years in South Texas.

An active member of the community, The Representative has previously served on the Agua Special Utility District as a Board Member and is also a former Board of Trustee for South Texas College (STC), which serves approximately 30,000 students across the Rio Grande Valley.

Representative Longoria was appointed to the House Appropriations Committee, and serves on the sub-committee for Article II. This session, he was also named Vice-Chair of the Investments & Financial Services Committee.

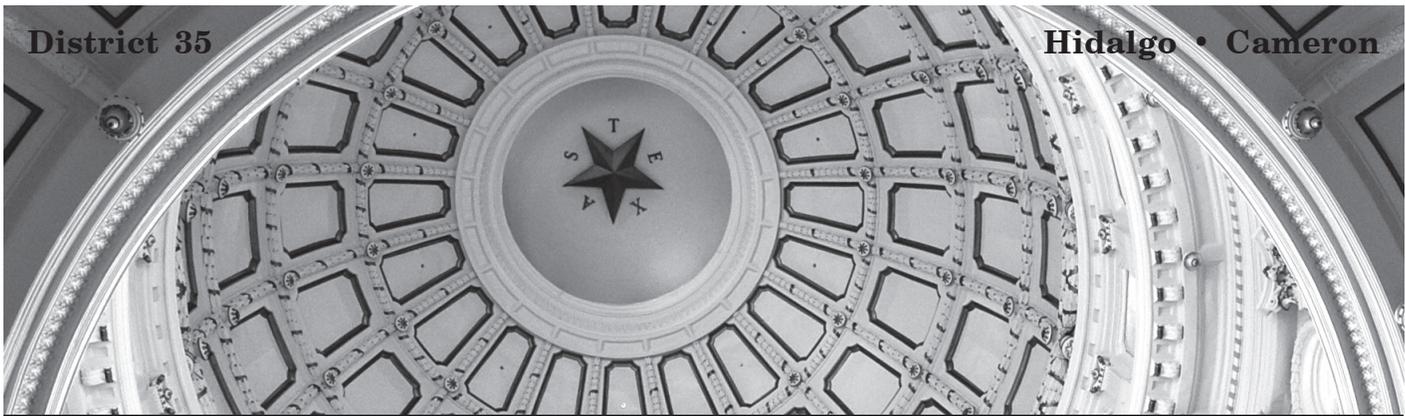
During the 2014 interim, the Representative was appointed to serve on the Joint Interim Committee to Study Human Trafficking and the Committee to study the Fiscal Impact of Texas Border Support Operations; and was recently appointed to the new 2015 Joint Interim Committee to Study Border Security.

Representative Longoria is married to Jennifer Ruiz-Longoria of Mission and they have two beautiful daughters, Camilla Lee Longoria and Madison Lee Longoria.



District 35

Hidalgo • Cameron



OSCAR LONGORIA

State Representative ★ 84th Legislative Capitol Report



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OSCAR LONGORIA
STATE REPRESENTATIVE



★ IMPORTANT AGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS ★

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		

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