



STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**EDDIE LUCIO III**  
DISTRICT 38



CAPITOL OFFICE  
P.O. Box 2910  
AUSTIN, TX 78768-2910  
(512) 463-0606  
FAX (512) 463-0660

**EDDIE LUCIO III**  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DISTRICT OFFICE  
2402 W. BUS. HWY. 77, STE. 1  
SAN BENITO, TEXAS 78586  
(956) 361-2795  
FAX (956) 361-9158

Dear Friends,

Serving you in Austin continues to be a sincere honor for me. During the 81st Legislative Session, I carefully crafted my legislative agenda to make certain that your needs and concerns were heard. We are proud to report to you the progress we have achieved on the key issues facing the Rio Grande Valley and the rest of the state.

The 81st session was different in many ways from the 80th but none was more exciting than the joy of being there for my wife as we went through our first pregnancy! Shortly after the session ended, my wife Jaime and I were blessed with a precious baby girl, Olivia Rose Lucio, on August 19th. Although we have enjoyed the duties of being an aunt and uncle, nothing could have prepared us for the amazing experience of being parents to our first born child. While I have always been deeply connected and involved with my legislative goals, being an expectant father gave new meaning to the work I was sent to Austin to do. Championing the causes of the Medicaid Buy-In Program, the Children's Health Insurance Program and others would ensure a bright future for not only my daughter, but for all the children of South Texas.

This session, I worked tirelessly to attain passage of significant legislation that will not only benefit the Rio Grande Valley, but the entire State of Texas. As a member of the Natural Resources Committee, I supported legislation that aims to ensure the future of our state's water supply, while making sure our land and water sources are used and developed responsibly. Serving on the State Affairs Committee, I fought hard for a more effective administration of our state government and sought sensible consumer protections from our state's energy and telecommunications industries. As Vice Chairman of the influential Calendars Committee, I pushed through important legislation that will bring about a positive impact throughout the state.

During the session we received hundreds of phone calls, emails, letters and visits from constituents and local officials regarding their opinions on important legislation. We encourage you to keep contacting us and we gladly welcome all your comments and opinions on all issues as we continue our work during the interim. Also, do not hesitate to contact us with any issue that we may be of assistance with. My staff and I thank you for your input and we look forward to working with you on issues that are important to us all. Thank you for your support and for allowing me to continue serving as your voice at the Capitol.



*Rep. Lucio and his wife Jaime*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eddie Lucio III".

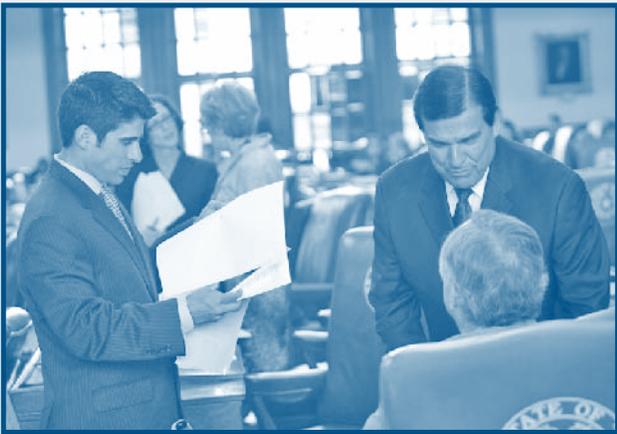
Eddie Lucio III



## Medical School in the Rio Grande Valley

Establishing a fully developed medical school in the Rio Grande Valley has long been a goal for most South Texas leaders. In collaboration with Senator Lucio, who began the fight over a decade ago, Representative Lucio sponsored Senate Bill 98. SB 98 authorizes the University of Texas System Board of Regents to establish the University of Texas Health Science Center-South Texas.

With the passage of this legislation the Rio Grande Valley is nearing the final steps toward expanding graduate education opportunities as well as ushering in economic growth and development that is sure to follow. The Regional Academic Health Center will be expanded to a health science center that will consist of a medical school and provide other health related degree programs throughout South Texas.



*Rep. & Sen. Lucio garnering votes for the medical school bill*

## Medicaid Buy-In

Currently throughout Texas, many children with developmental disabilities are not eligible for services through Medicaid which places a significant financial strain on their family. Often times, this forces families to lower their income by taking lower paying jobs, turn down promotions and other extreme actions such as divorce in order to stay eligible for services. Representative Lucio successfully passed legislation creating the Medicaid buy-in program for children with certain developmental disabilities. Families with income up to 300% of the federal poverty level will be eligible to participate in this program. Participating families would pay a monthly premium that is determined by a sliding scale based on their income. This program, expected to be implemented by September 2010, will assist families who are part of the hard working middle class and who struggle with providing adequate health care to their children.

## Expanding Insurance Coverage for Autism

Although comprehensive treatment for children with autism has been proven to diminish related complications, the associated costs are unaffordable to most Texans. Previous law required insurers to cover these expenses for autistic children between the ages of three and six. Additional coverage will assist these children during a critical period of their development and better prepare them for the transition into adulthood. Rep. Lucio joint authored House Bill 451 which will save the state money in long term care costs and improve the quality of life for autistic children by expanding health insurance coverage from the time a child's diagnosed through their tenth birthday.

## Coordinating Child Health Programs

Childhood obesity remains a pressing public health concern. Numerous measures to address the problem through school-based programs and interventions have been implemented, but little attention has been paid to the early childhood population. Representative Lucio sponsored Senate Bill 395, establishing the Early Childhood Health and Nutrition Interagency Council. The council will engage the seven state agencies that have a role in the regulation and management of early childhood settings in Texas. These agencies will work with experts to study best practices for improving early childhood nutrition and create a plan that will provide related recommendations for implementation over a six year period.

Representative Lucio also sponsored Senate Bill 1824 in an effort to increase government accountability, efficiency, and improve the quality of services provided to children and young people with special needs with the creation of the Interagency Task Force for Children with Special Needs. The task force will create a five year strategic plan to improve the coordination, quality and efficiency of services for young people under the age of 22 with serious mental illness, chronic illness, and developmental disabilities. The task force will be composed of ten different state agency heads serving children with special needs, four legislators, three parents, and one representative from a local mental health authority.



*Rep. Lucio & Speaker Straus welcome Leadership Harlingen to the Texas House*

## Supporting Our Veterans

For those individuals who return from military service and enroll in college, the transition from soldier to student can undoubtedly be a difficult one. According to data from the U.S. Department of Education, veterans are less likely to graduate from college than students who have never served in the military. Representative Lucio passed House Bill 269 this session, which fully recognizes the educational value of the occupational specialty and training a veteran receives while in the military and encourages veterans to enroll in and graduate from college. Veterans who graduated from high school, served at least 2 years and were honorably discharged will receive credit hours for all physical education requirements and up to 12 credit hours of free elective requirements in a degree plan at all public Texas universities and colleges.

Representative Lucio also supported legislation that will finally provide an exemption to veterans who are totally disabled or cannot work because of service related injuries from having to pay property taxes on their homes. Applications for these exemptions must be completed between January 1 and April 30 and a current VA award letter is required. To apply, obtain an application from the Cameron County Appraisal District.



*Rep. Lucio discussing one of his bills with Speaker Straus*

For veterans who do not have a 100% rating, the following home tax exemptions may apply:

DISABILITY RATING:	TAX EXEMPTION:
10% to 29%	First \$ 5,000 of appraised
30% to 49%	First \$ 7,500 of appraised
50% to 69%	First \$ 10,000 of appraised
70% & above	First \$ 12,000 of appraised

Veterans 65 years and older with 10% or more are entitled to an exemption of first \$12,000 of appraised.



*Rep. Lucio welcomes Brownsville ISD Board Members and administrators to the Texas House*

## Improving Colonias

Improving the quality of life for people residing in the colonias of the Rio Grande Valley has always been a priority for Representative Lucio. During the 81st session, he sponsored Senate Bill 1371 which modifies eligibility requirements of the Colonia Self-Help Program to allow for additional non-profits and political subdivisions to apply for funding of projects under the program. The Colonia Self-Help Program funds projects that connect colonias with water and wastewater utilities. These programs are unique in that they require local residents to participate in the instillation. The program will now allow a greater pool of applicants and will generate potentially more projects in order to fully utilize the program's funding.

Representative Lucio also joint authored House Bill 2374 that authorizes the construction of service connections on private property for water and wastewater projects under the Economically Distressed Areas Program. This legislation amends current law allowing financial assistance by the Texas Water Development Board for the connection of residences in economically distressed areas to public water supply and sanitary sewer systems.

## Tax Break for Small Business

The small businesses of Texas are without a doubt a major element in our economic landscape and in most cases are family owned and operated. Representative Lucio supported legislation that modifies the margins tax and lowers the tax burden for over 40,000 small businesses across the state. The tax exemption for small businesses will go from \$300,000 to \$1 million for the years 2010 and 2011, and \$600,000 in future years. The increase in the exemption will foster the expansion of businesses and create more jobs.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.house.state.tx.us>

<http://www.legis.state.tx.us>

<http://www.kids.house.state.tx.us>



## Green State Vehicles

Representative Lucio believes that the state should lead by example in the area of energy and environmental conservation. The state vehicle fleet is currently comprised of roughly 27,000 active vehicles distributed among 95 agencies and universities. Representative Lucio's House Bill 432 raised the requirement on state agencies to purchase low-emission vehicles from 10 percent to 25 percent. Buying more fuel-efficient vehicles can help save \$200 to \$1,500 each year per vehicle in fuel costs and help the environment by emitting less carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. It also updates the requirement that a state agency with a fleet of more than 15 vehicles must purchase vehicles that

use compressed natural gas, biodiesel, ethanol, electricity, or other alternative fuels, and clarifies the specifics of this requirement by outlining that the vehicles must use the fuel, not just be capable of using it.

## Energy Assistance Outreach

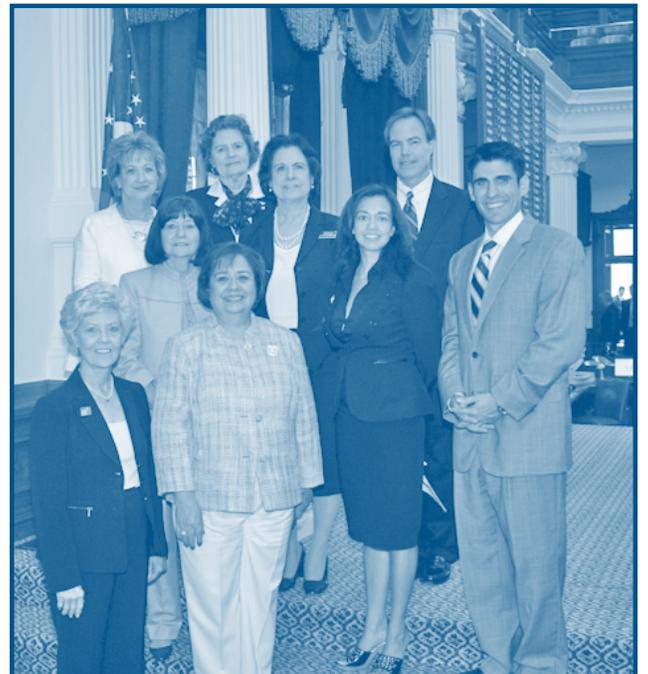
The Spanish language has long been prevalent with many families in Texas, and along the Texas-Mexico border region it is many people's primary language. Recognizing this fact Representative Lucio authored House Bill 434 to ensure that a number of our State's energy assistance programs are advertised in both English and Spanish. These programs include the Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program, which provides heating and cooling home energy assistance, and the Weatherization Assistance Program, which helps low-income customers control their energy costs through the installation of weatherization materials and consumer education. Both of these programs are administered through Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs. This law requires that all applications, forms, and educational materials be made available in both English and Spanish. With a significant funding increase in the program from the federal government, it is important to make sure that our state's Spanish-speaking communities are able to take advantage of these great programs as well.



*Rep. Lucio speaking to House members about his legislation*

## Bringing State Dollars to the District

The 81st legislative session presented legislators with the challenges of bridging the funding gap in the state's budget and determining how best to utilize additional federal funds with the needs of Texans in mind. Representative Lucio fought hard for pay raises for teachers and state employees, \$264 million in additional funding for higher education financial aid, as well as increased funding to address the nursing shortage across Texas. The budget includes an \$800 raise for all teachers, counselors and speech pathologists. Representative Lucio also worked diligently to secure \$6.5 million in funding for the Regional Academic Health Science Center expansion plan and \$6 million in funding for the Texas Diabetes Council/Stark Diabetes Center which provides healthcare and nutritional education to residents in the Rio Grande Valley.



*Rep. Lucio welcomes the Zonta Club of Brownsville, including his mother Mrs. Minnie Lucio to the Texas House*



## Rubén O’Bell Chief of Staff

A lifelong resident of Brownsville, Rubén has a B.A. in Political Science and History and is currently a Masters of Public Policy graduate student. Before working with the House of Representatives, he was employed with the Texas Attorney General’s Office, Child Support Division.

During the legislative session, Rubén’s priorities are working State Affairs Committee assignments and managing the Representative’s Vice Chairmanship on the Calendars Committee. During the interim, Rubén maintains a strong working relationship and communications with other

and researches and responds to all legislative inquiries, proposals and correspondence.

## Gilbert Sandoval, Jr. District Director

Gilbert is a native of Brownsville and a graduate of North Texas State University with a B.B.A. in Marketing. Before joining the House of Representatives, Gilbert spent 13 years in the banking industry as consumer and commercial lender.

During the legislative session, Gilbert will work on State Affairs Committee assignments and fill in as support on the Natural Resources Committee. As District Director, he is responsible for all district office logistics.

## Sergio Zarate Community Liaison

Sergio, a lifelong Brownsville resident, attended the University of Houston and graduated from the University of Texas at Brownsville with a B.A. in Kinesiology and Business Administration.

He is a small business owner and cofounder of Down By the Border, an organization helping children with special needs. During the legislative session, Sergio attends events and functions in the district on behalf of Representative Lucio.

## Stephanie Villareal Administrative Assistant

Born and raised in Harlingen, Stephanie is a current student at UT-Brownsville. Her primary focus is in Government and Sociology and will pursue a Masters in Public Affairs.

Stephanie works in the District Office during the interim and also works at the Capitol during the legislative session where she supervises all administrative



*Ruben (left) and Charlie (right) receive last minute briefing before a committee hearing*

elected officials and all local, state and federal agencies.

## Charlie Leal Legislative Director

Charlie is a native of Los Fresnos and a graduate of Texas A&M University with a B.A. in Political Science and History. Charlie has nearly five years in service to the state with experience in both the Texas House of Representatives and the Texas Senate.

During the legislative session, Charlie implements and administers Representative Lucio’s legislative agenda, while also monitoring all legislation that comes before the Texas Legislature. Charlie manages the Capitol office



*Charlie (right) and Ruben (left) finalizing funding requests for projects in the district*



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*Rep. Lucio looks on as Governor Perry signs the medical school legislation*

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## HOW TO CONTACT REP. LUCIO



**CAPITOL OFFICE:**  
P.O. BOX 2910  
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78768-2910  
PHONE: 512-463-0606  
FAX: 512-463-0660

**DISTRICT OFFICE:**  
2402 W. BUS. HWY. 77, STE. I  
SAN BENITO, TEXAS 78586  
PHONE: 956-361-2795  
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[EDDIE.LUCIO\\_III@HOUSE.STATE.TX.US](mailto:EDDIE.LUCIO_III@HOUSE.STATE.TX.US)