



Pete's Periódico

Making a Better Texas

by Sen. Pete Flores, Senate District 19

March 25, 2019

We have passed the halfway point of the 86th Texas Legislature; under 70 days remain to make a better Texas. Through my work as a Texas Senator, I try to embody Sam Houston's definition of leadership: "A leader is someone who helps improve the lives of other people or improve the system they live under."

That's my goal this Legislative session: leave Texas better than I found it. In this effort, the Texas Senate has already passed almost 30 bills—most with unanimous approval. I was a coauthor on six of those bills (Senate Bills 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 12).

Senate Bill 500, the supplemental appropriations bill, was among the bills with unanimous support. This appropriation comes on top of the general appropriations bill we are crafting in Senate Finance Committee. Every session, this bill gives the legislature the opportunity to address specific issues the state is facing with one-time appropriations.

In this session, the supplemental budget amounts to over \$6.1 billion in additional state spending; \$1.7 billion from General Revenue and \$4.4 billion from the Economic Stabilization Fund (ESF), the state's savings account. The current balance of the ESF, commonly referred to as the Rainy Day Fund, is approximately \$13 billion.

Texas has had some rainy days: approximately half this supplemental budget will go directly to Hurricane Harvey relief. Texas was hit with a once-in-a-generation storm, destroying many coastal communities and affecting all Texans. We all saw the heroic stories of Texans stepping up to help Texans—now it's our turn.

The money related to Harvey will fulfill disaster grants, repayment of disaster assistance programs, public school funding, infrastructure rebuilding, and more. We are also looking ahead to future disasters, designating money for strengthening dams and state flood plan infrastructure projects. Other than Harvey relief, the supplemental includes money for school safety, foster care, and state hospitals.

Even after this large withdrawal, there will be around \$8 billion remaining in the account, continuing to lead the nation as the largest such state savings account. In Texas, fiscal responsibility is more than a campaign phrase.

One of my bills, Senate Bill 225, has passed Committee and now stands ready for a full Senate vote. The bill creates a new military license plate within the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles for veterans who have received the Army Occupation Medal. There are already over 180 such military license plates; adding this one recognizes the brave men who performed occupation service in Japan, Germany, Italy, and Austria in the aftermath of World War II.

This week, Medina and Real counties are visiting for their legislative days. Atascosa County, where I live, will be visiting on April 2. Another big event coming this week: our Del Rio office is officially opening at the end of this month. Computers, phones, and furniture are being moved in as you read; watch my social medias for the official announcement.

Our San Antonio district office moved to its permanent location earlier this month in the Patriots Casa on the campus of Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Formerly, it was on a different building on campus. You could reach that office at (210) 784-5024 or visit One University Way, Patriots Casa Room 205, San Antonio, TX 78224.

As always, never hesitate to reach out to our Capitol office or district offices with any questions or concerns. I have enjoyed the opportunity to visit both Alpine and Ft. Stockton in recent weekends; little refreshes me more than a good drive across the beautiful plains of southwest Texas, meeting with Texans of Senate District 19. We are rich in history, tradition, and resources—the greatest of which is our people. Adelante!

Sen. Pete Flores is a Republican Texas Senator representing Senate District 19.

To contact Sen. Flores, call his Capitol office at (512) 463-0119 or send an email to District19.Flores@senate.texas.gov. Sen. Flores welcomes all constituents to visit his office at the Texas Capitol, room E1.608. Sen. Flores has an office in San Antonio and Del Rio; Ft. Stockton office coming soon. For constituent concerns in San Antonio, contact Monica Rojas at Monica.Rojas@senate.texas.gov; for Del Rio, contact Zachary Cadena at Zachary.Cadena@senate.texas.gov. For daily updates, follow him on Facebook: [SenatorPeteFlores](#) and on Twitter: [@PeteFlores_TX](#).