

Senator Judith Zaffirini



Reports to the Families of District 21

Dear Friends:

The Pulitzer Prize-winning writer, Katherine Anne Porter, whose childhood home is in Hays County, wrote that we can overcome society's challenges, *if only all of us who want a change for the better just get up and work for it, all the time, with as much knowledge and intelligence as we can muster.*

Porter's stirring words reflect my purpose in the Texas Senate: I work every day to bring about a better future for our children, our families, our communities and our great state.

These communities are home to more than 800,000 constituents living in 18 counties, namely, Bee, Caldwell, Duval, Jim Hogg, Karnes, La Salle, Live Oak, McMullen, San Patricio, Starr, Webb, Wilson and Zapata; and parts of Atascosa, Bexar, Guadalupe, Hays and Travis.

Our district is notable not only for its size—it stretches from the Rio Grande to the Colorado River—but also for its diversity: It includes small towns and big cities; farms and ranches; and ports that transport goods by air, land and sea.

Many miles separate our communities, but we are linked by our shared priorities. These include affordable, high-quality educational opportunities; jobs and a strong economy; public safety; transportation; conservation of our natural resources; a fair justice system; and health and human services, especially for the very young, the very old and persons with disabilities.

Because of my Senate committee assignments, I am singularly positioned to make a positive impact on these issues for the families of our district. I serve as Vice Chair of the Agriculture, Water & Rural Affairs Committee and on the Natural Resources and Economic Development,



“Civility, communication, collaboration and preparation are the cornerstones of effective public service.”

— Senator Judith Zaffirini

State Affairs and Health and Human Services committees. What's more, I am delighted to serve as Senate Chair of the Eagle Ford Shale Legislative Caucus and as a member of the Texas Judicial Council. Count on me to continue to cast every vote by balancing the needs and priorities of our district with those of our great State.

Katherine Anne Porter also wrote, *the habit which distinguishes civilized people from others is that of discussion, exchange of opinion and ideas, the ability to differ without quarrelling, to say what you have to say civilly and then to listen civilly to another speaker.*

Civility, communication, collaboration and preparation are the cornerstones of effective public service. To prompt meaningful discussion of key issues, this annual newsletter is not only a progress report, but also a call for action and a challenge to work together constructively.

Your feedback remains crucial to our success, especially

because some of my best legislation was suggested by constituents. We will continue to maintain our open door policy and respond to every letter, email and telephone call.

My prayer is that the Lord will continue to inspire us to work for a better future and to bless us with grace and good will, family and friendship, and health and happiness. Together we can continue to make a difference for the families of our district and of our state.

Judith Zaffirini

Judith Zaffirini
State Senator, District 21
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SENATOR JUDITH ZAFFIRINI is a champion for the needs and priorities of constituents in every Senate District 21 county. She is shown in photograph 1. with Texas Farm Bureau leaders (L-R) Raymond and Anna Ruth Meyer of Atascosa County and Ervin Kotzur, Milton Lowak, Margie Boening and Russell Boening of Wilson County; and 2. with Ciri Villarreal, the mayor of Mathis in San Patricio County.

TOPDD Strives to Prevent Developmental Disabilities

Advocacy for issues related to children and persons with disabilities is Senator Judith Zaffirini’s lifelong mission. As a 5-year-old first grader concerned about schoolmates stricken by polio, she collected dimes and sold salted peanuts to raise money for the March of Dimes. As a 15-year-old high school junior and president of the Laredo All-City Student Council, she raised money for children with intellectual disabilities, and at 22 she served on the Board of the Texas Mental Health Association.

As a first-term senator in 1989, she passed Senate Bill 1527, creating a state office that would focus on gathering data, raising awareness and educating the public about the prevention of developmental disabilities.

Since its inception, the Texas Office for Prevention of Developmental Disabilities (TOPDD) has helped establish Texas as a national leader in preventing child injuries and fetal alcohol spectrum disorders that cause developmental disabilities, and its research and programming have been recognized as outstanding models.

In recent years the program has expanded its reach substantially, increasing the number of persons trained from 300 per year in 2012 to approximately 600 per year in 2016.

“The programs and training provided by TOPDD not only are protecting children from serious disabilities

and health issues, but also are saving lives,” Senator Zaffirini said. “Unintentional injuries are among the leading causes of death for Texas children.”

To support and expand on TOPDD’s efforts, as a member of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee, Senator Zaffirini has prioritized authoring and passing legislation that promotes child safety and the prevention of developmental disabilities. Since 1987 she’s sponsored and passed 124 bills related to child safety and welfare, including bills related to child safety seats, immunizations and teams that review and improve the response to child fatalities.

Her priorities include passing legislation and securing funds to save lives and prevent developmental disabilities. In 2015 she received the



PROMOTING ORGAN DONATION is the goal of Guadalupe County’s Friends for Life-Seguin and Senator Judith Zaffirini, who sponsored and passed the bill creating Texas’ organ donation registry as well as four other bills enhancing it. She is shown with organ donors and recipients and their families.

J.C. Montgomery Child Safety Award from TOPDD and Scottish Rite Hospital for her decades of leadership for Texas children, including in the arenas of child safety, juvenile justice, children’s mental health, infant health and services for children with disabilities.

She served on TOPDD’s board from 1989 through 1994 and also passed bills establishing committee members’ training requirements, standards of conduct and staggered six-year terms. In 2015 she preserved the office by amending legislation that would have terminated it.

“Collectively, we have made significant progress in raising awareness and developing strategies to address preventable disabilities in Texas, but there’s much more to do,” Senator Zaffirini said. “In 2015 some claimed TOPDD was no longer needed, but we continued it, just as we must prevail in further improving child safety.”

Senator Zaffirini encourages her constituents to participate in TOPDD’s volunteer programs that focus on preventing child injuries, precluding fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and improving outcomes for children who have a co-occurring intellectual or developmental disability and a mental health condition.

“Volunteers are an integral part of TOPDD, and anyone with a passion for protecting children can make a difference,” Senator Zaffirini said.

Zaffirini: Quality Education Key to Texas' Future

The evidence keeps building that a high-quality education system is essential to Texas' future prosperity. A recent study by Georgetown University found that by 2020, 65 percent of all jobs in the economy will require education beyond high school. Accordingly, Senator Judith Zaffirini continues to advocate for expanded educational opportunities for all persons of all ages and at all levels.

"Access to a high-quality education is a right, not a privilege," she said. "Because each segment of the educational pipeline is critical, Texas should invest significantly in early childhood, public and higher education."

After severe cuts in 2011 and minimal increases in 2013, during the 2015 legislative session Governor Greg Abbott prioritized legislation to secure more funding for early childhood education and asked Senator Zaffirini to sponsor his bill. She authored Senate Bill (SB) 801, which ultimately passed as House Bill 4, providing an additional \$118 million in grants for high-quality pre-K programs in the 2016-17 biennium.

Of that funding, more than \$8.3 million was awarded to enhance pre-K programs at 31 public school districts in 13 Senate District (SD) 21 counties, namely, Bee, Bexar, Duval, Guadalupe, Hays, Karnes, La Salle, San Patricio, Starr, Travis, Webb, Wilson and Zapata. An additional \$540,324 was awarded to three open-enrollment charter schools that operate in Senator Zaffirini's district.

Research consistently has shown that full-day programs have far more lasting positive effects on children than half-day programs. What's more, every dollar invested in early childhood development yields at least a \$3.50 return on investment, and that is among the most conservative estimates.

"I hope some schools that currently do not offer full-day pre-K programs will prioritize expanding their existing programs to full-day, espe-



BEE COUNTY STUDENTS listen to Senator Judith Zaffirini speak about the importance of higher education.

cially if they receive enough funding to do so," Senator Zaffirini said.

Overall in 2015, Texas lawmakers included \$41.2 billion for K-12 education in the state's 2016-17 budget, a \$1.5 billion increase from the previous biennium.

In 2016 the Texas Supreme Court ruled that the state's school finance system is deeply flawed and needs "transformational, top-to-bottom reform," but that it meets the very minimum constitutional requirements. The court called school finance "an urgent challenge" for the legislature to address.

"The Supreme Court's ruling is a call to action to improve our school finance system," Senator Zaffirini said. "Funding education equitably and appropriately is critical not only for our

children's future, but also for the future of our state."

In the higher education arena, lawmakers increased funding by 7.5 percent in the 2016-17 budget to account for enrollment growth, for a total of \$19.9 billion. They also authorized \$3.1 billion in tuition revenue bonds for 64 higher education construction projects and added \$40 million to a new Governor's University Research Fund to attract top

researchers and promote high-quality research.

SD 21 offers a variety of postsecondary educational and workforce training opportunities that open doors and inspire students with a lifelong love of learning. These include four-year universities such as Texas A&M International University, Texas State University, and The University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley; Austin, Coastal Bend, Laredo and South Texas community colleges; and the Laredo Regional Campus of The University of Texas Health Science Center-San Antonio.

Count on me to continue to champion these and all Texas institutions of higher education in the Senate," said Senator Zaffirini.



EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES for all is Senator Judith Zaffirini's goal. She is shown in photograph 1, greeting sisters Anahi and Daniela Lopez at Bowie Elementary School in Hays County; and 2, receiving an appreciation award from Lydia Lopez of the Starr County Retired School Employees Association.

Senator Judith Zaffirini Champions Wise Stewardship of Texas' Air, Land, Water

The Book of Genesis describes how God *took man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it*. These lines of scripture inspire Senator Judith Zaffirini's work to promote good stewardship of our air, land and water as Vice Chair of the Senate Agriculture, Water and Rural Affairs Committee and a member of the Senate Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee. Carrying an environmental agenda in each of the 15 legislative sessions in which she has served in the Texas Senate, she has filed a total of 99 environmental bills and passed 50.

"Count on me to continue to champion legislation and funding that protect our natural resources for future generations," she said.

Keeping Cities Healthy, Clean, Beautiful

Senator Zaffirini believes that local communities should be able to make their own decisions about how to keep their streets and waterways safe, clean, healthy and beautiful.

"These are among the most basic functions of local government," Senator Zaffirini said. "Local governments are closest to the people and are best equipped to make decisions about local ordinances."

Preventing litter generated from discarded plastic bags was the goal of Laredo's bag reduction ordinance, which was passed in 2014. The city had been facing a deluge of plastic bags—more than 120 million were consumed annually—many of which were clogging the city's creeks and storm drains and polluting its only source of drinking water, the Rio Grande.

Like Austin's ordinance before it, the Laredo ordinance is facing a lawsuit. When a group of North Texas legislators intervened opposing self-determination for Laredo, Senator Zaffirini filed her own amicus brief in support of her hometown's ability to protect its rivers, drinking water and environment.

"People who are not from Senate District 21 should not dictate how our communities address local issues," Senator Zaffirini said. "The City of Laredo was on firm legal standing when it passed the ordinance, which I hope ultimately will be upheld."

Preserving the River

The San Marcos River is an ecological treasure and a magnet for recreational users and tubers, more than 80,000 of whom visit each year.

Due to a lack of enforcement, however, some parts of the river attract minors who drink illegally and river-goers who engage in reckless and unlawful behaviors. As a result there are frequent alcohol-related incidents on the river, ranging from minor to catastrophic in nature.

In 2014, for example, a 19-year-old drowned after a day of tubing and drinking alcohol with friends, and in 2016 a 21-year-old woman was charged with intoxication manslaughter after allegedly drinking while floating on the river and being involved in a car crash that killed a man and injured his pregnant wife, causing her to lose their unborn child.

What's more, landowners along the river face problems with excessive littering, public intoxication, assaults, trespassing, noise and traffic.

A bill authored by Senator Zaffirini in 2013 and again in 2015 would have authorized local voters to create a recreation district along the portion of the San Marcos River where many of the problems occur.

The bill was passed twice by the Senate, but died in the House of Representatives both times. The senator is expected to file it again, and stakeholders agreed to join a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department task force to identify ways to control illegal behavior, improve public safety, safeguard private property rights and conserve environmental quality along the river.



JIM HOGG COUNTY Judge Humberto Gonzalez, Department of Public Safety (DPS) official Paul Watkins and County Fair Royalty join Senator Judith Zaffirini to celebrate the grand opening of a new DPS office.



THE GAME WARDEN JAMES E. DAUGHTREY Memorial Highway, honoring a McMullen County lawman killed in the line of duty, was created by Senator Judith Zaffirini's legislation. She is shown with Texas Game Wardens and Warden Daughtrey's family at the highway's dedication.

"Residents of Caldwell, Guadalupe and Hays counties do not want any more preventable tragedies to occur on the San Marcos River," Senator Zaffirini said. "Protecting this precious natural resource would increase safe and lawful tourism to the area. All Texans have the right to enjoy the river, but they should do so safely, lawfully and without causing irreparable environmental degradation."

Protecting the Environment, Preventing Zika

The potential spread of the Zika virus in Texas is a major concern, and the Senate Health and Human Services Committee, of which Senator Zaffirini is a member, is reviewing the state's response to the disease.

"Environmental and public health issues are interconnected," Senator Zaffirini said. "Improperly handled scrap tires can not only cause pollution, but also serve as a breeding ground for mosquitoes that might carry diseases such as Zika, West Nile virus or dengue fever."

In 2015 the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) found that more than one million discarded tires are lying in unauthorized piles in SD 21, including sites in Bexar, Caldwell, Duval, Hays, Karnes, San Patricio, Travis and Wilson counties.

In 2015 Senator Zaffirini co-authored legislation by Senator José Rodríguez, D-El Paso, to stop illegal tire dumping and protect health and the environment from hazardous tire piles. The bill was passed by the Senate and by a House committee, but failed because the House of Representatives did not consider it.

Local communities in SD 21 have enacted their own ordinances to combat illegal tire dumping, and in 2014 the TCEQ paid to remove thousands of tires from an illegal dump in Bee County.

"These efforts are a step in the right direction, but we need to do more," Senator Zaffirini said. "The arrival of Zika in Texas underscores the urgent need for action to reduce scrap tires."

Addressing Landfills

Proposed landfill projects in Caldwell, Guadalupe and Webb counties highlight not only the necessity of addressing environmental concerns, but also the importance of engaging and communicating with members of the community where large-scale projects are planned.

"Landfills perform a critical function, but they require careful oversight during every stage of planning, construction and operation," Senator Zaffirini said. "SD 21 residents care deeply about the potential impacts on health and safety, traffic and the integrity of our water supply. If contamination were to occur at some landfills, it could not only pollute the drinking water supply, but also make water unsafe for recreation, livestock and wildlife."

Senator Zaffirini joined Senator Donna Campbell, R-New Braunfels, in opposing the Guadalupe County project because of concerns about the local watershed and widespread opposition from residents.

The senator also prevailed upon the TCEQ to host public meetings for Caldwell and Webb county residents to ask questions and express concerns about the proposed landfills before the agency takes action regarding them.

"I believe controversial projects such as these should

be in supportive communities that consider them economic development, not in areas in which they are opposed strongly," she said.

Preventing Aerial Spraying of Herbicides

In 2016 Senator Zaffirini received the Special Community Recognition Award from the Rio Grande International Study Center, a nonprofit environmental organization whose mission is to protect the Rio Grande through awareness, advocacy, research, education, stewardship and bi-national collaboration.

The senator received the award for her efforts to prevent the aerial spraying of herbicides along the river's banks.

"Controlling Carrizo cane along the Rio Grande is an important priority, especially because the proliferation of this invasive species along the river damages the environment, uses valuable water resources and raises border security concerns," Senator Zaffirini said. "Many communities, however, believe that there are better solutions than the aerial spraying of toxic chemicals along the riverbanks."

Starr, Webb and Zapata counties, along with several city councils in SD 21, have passed resolutions opposing the aerial spraying of herbicides to control Carrizo cane.

"As a result of our action, the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board assured me they would not pursue the aerial spraying of herbicides in communities that oppose it," said Senator Zaffirini, who co-authored 2015 legislation calling for a state plan to control Carrizo cane. "Biological, mechanical, and cut-stem herbicide methods should be considered as possible safe, effective alternatives."



ZAPATA COUNTY LEADER Ricardo Ramirez, president of International Bank of Commerce-Zapata, discusses local priorities with Senator Judith Zaffirini.



RETIRED STATE EMPLOYEE Doris Boeker of Cotulla talks with Senator Judith Zaffirini at a ceremony celebrating the restoration of the La Salle County Courthouse.



INTERACTING WITH CONSTITUENTS is not only enjoyable, but also critical to Senator Judith Zaffirini’s effectiveness in the Texas Senate. She is shown in photograph 1. helping Leon and Ginger Matula of Karnes County celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary; 2. visiting with Bexar County postal worker Homer Hernandez and his wife, Alma; and 3. discussing local issues with Dr. Belia Blanton of Duval County.

Senator Zaffirini: It’s Time for Texas to Ban Texting While Driving

Texting while driving is a serious problem in Texas, which is why Senator Judith Zaffirini continues to pursue her quest to pass a statewide law banning the dangerous practice.

Distracted driving is getting progressively worse in Texas, and in 2015 it was a factor in more than 105,000 crashes in our state, an increase of nearly five percent from 2014. These crashes were responsible for more than 3,100 incapacitating injuries and 476 deaths. All were needless and could have been prevented.

What’s more, in 2010 the nationwide economic cost resulting from crashes involving a distracted driver totaled \$46 billion, and in 2013 they cost employers \$8.2 billion.

Texting while driving increases the risk of a collision by at least eight times. According to the Texas Department of Transportation, driver distraction causes one in every five crashes in our state, and a recent study by the AAA Institute for Traffic Safety indicates that it causes nearly 60 percent of accidents in which teenagers are behind the wheel.

In Travis County 15-year-old Delia Ramirez was killed when an inattentive driver ran a red light and crashed into the vehicle she was riding in, and in Webb County, texting is suspected as a factor in a deadly wreck that killed two young women out jogging.

“Something as small as a text message has snuffed out lives and caused immense pain and heartache for fami-

lies,” Senator Zaffirini said. “A statewide ban on texting while driving could make a real difference in reducing the number of deaths and injuries on our roadways.”

Such bans have been implemented in 46 states, and researchers at Texas A&M University found that the number of car crash hospitalizations declined in states that instituted strict laws prohibiting texting while driving.



LIVE OAK COUNTY leaders meet with Senator Judith Zaffirini at the Texas Capitol. They include (clockwise from top left) Jamye Royal, Commissioner Donna Mills, Commissioner Richard Lee, Glynis Holm Strause and Brooklynn Soliz.

Senator Zaffirini has championed the issue in Texas for four legislative sessions, authoring legislation in 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2015. It gained support each session, and in 2015 a bipartisan bill by Rep. Tom Craddick, R-Midland, and Senator Zaffirini was passed overwhelmingly by the House of Representatives and by a Senate committee before coming up one vote short of passage by the Senate.

More than 80 Texas cities have passed their own bans on texting while driving, resulting in conflicting laws that confuse drivers.

Nevertheless, until a statewide ban is passed, Senator Zaffirini urges SD 21 residents to ask their hometown city councils to pass local regulations.

“For a law to be effective, drivers also will have to change their behavior,” she said. “To reduce the risk of a crash, for example, you can put your phone in silent mode until you reach your destination or put it in a place where you can’t see it and won’t be tempted to reach for it.”

If they are traveling with a passenger, drivers can select a “designated texter.” What’s more, there are many downloadable smartphone apps such as Live2Text and AT&T’s DriveMode that can help prevent texting-while-driving.

“Perhaps most important, the next time you see friends or family members start to send a text while driving, remind them that it can wait,” Senator Zaffirini said. “Their lives—and yours—could depend on it.”

Texas Judicial Council Enhances Access to Justice

Senator Judith Zaffirini's strong belief in a fair, impartial justice system inspires her work as a member of the Texas Judicial Council (TJC), a position to which she was appointed by Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick.

TJC, the policy-making body for the state judiciary, has led reform efforts in areas such as truancy, guardianship, specialty courts, indigent defense and court technology.

"All residents of our state and district deserve equal treatment under the law," Senator Zaffirini said. "Accordingly, it is my priority to advocate for changes that enhance access to justice for everyone."

Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Nathan Hecht, who chairs TJC, also appointed Senator Zaffirini to three TJC committees: Elders, Court Security and Mental Health.

Because the population of Texans 65 years of age or greater is estimated to more than double by 2040, many of whom will need assistance with daily affairs, the Elders Committee is focused on improving Texas' guardianship system.

The issue continues to be a key priority for Senator Zaffirini, who in 2015 passed 10 bills improving guardianship and court appointments.

"Count on me to continue to author legislation that ensures the system not

only is fair and efficient, but also protects vulnerable Texans while helping them live with the greatest possible degree of independence," she said.

An assassination attempt that seriously wounded Travis County District Judge Julie Kocurek in 2015 led to TJC's recent focus on court security. Accordingly, the Court Security Committee is assessing security at courthouses and identifying policies to ensure they remain safe, welcoming places for Texans administering or seeking justice.

"Deficiencies in court security threaten the integrity of our justice system," Senator Zaffirini said.

A longtime champion for persons with mental illnesses, the senator has passed 30 related bills and is working on TJC's Mental Health Committee to enhance the administration of justice for this population.

In 2015 she authored and passed legislation preventing the use of harmful restraints on persons with mental illnesses under emergency detention and facilitating their transfer to treatment facilities.

Senate District 21 Constituents Great Source of Legislative Ideas

Whether during the legislative session or the interim, Senator Judith Zaffirini continuously seeks suggestions for legislation that addresses the needs and priorities of Senate District (SD) 21 families. Accordingly, the residents of SD 21 often are among the best sources of ideas.

"I welcome suggestions for bills that would improve quality of life in our communities and throughout our great state," Senator Zaffirini said. "No issue is too big or too small, and every issue is important to someone."

Because the legislative filing deadline occurs on the 60th day of every biennial session, the senator urges those with ideas to submit them as soon as possible so they can be vetted and drafted into bills timely.

"Good ideas can come from anyone or anywhere, and we would love to hear yours, even if it isn't fully developed yet," Senator Zaffirini said. "My staff and I have experience crafting new laws and can assist in transforming a good concept into a detailed proposal. Some of my best legislation was suggested by constituents."

For example, Morris Cowley, a retired volunteer firefighter from Atascosa County, was the source of

Senator Zaffirini's Senate Bill (SB) 31 (2015), which permanently authorizes volunteer firefighters to hold 10 fundraisers a year, thereby allowing departments to raise more funds for equipment and training.

In 2015 Live Oak County farmers Lonnie Stewart and Mark Katzfey recommended the senator's SB 974, which would have eliminated an unnecessary tax penalty on rural landowners seeking to change the status of their land from agricultural to non-agricultural use.

What's more, three attorneys from SD 21—Manuel Flores, Victor Villarreal and Eduardo Romero—submitted proposals to reform Texas' system for court appointments of guardians and attorneys. Senator Zaffirini expanded these ideas into two bills she passed in 2015, namely, SB 1369, requiring the reporting of court appointees' compensation; and SB 1876, requiring the rotation of court appointments.

To submit your own ideas or discuss problems that should be solved, use the contact information for Senator Zaffirini and her staff provided in the box at the bottom of this page.



THE BEST IDEAS for Senator Judith Zaffirini's legislation often come from constituents and local leaders. She is shown (above) with Austin City Council Member Sabino "Pio" Renteria; and (below) with Myrtle Moore of Caldwell County.



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Senator Judith Zaffirini a Tireless Advocate for Families

A tireless advocate for Texas families, Senator Judith Zaffirini is the second-highest-ranking member of the Texas Senate and the highest-ranking woman and Hispanic. Of the more than 900 honors she has received for her legislative, public service and professional work, more than 260 are in communication.

In 2016 she was named an Outstanding Alumna of the Moody College of Communication and named to the Hall of Fame of *The Daily Texan*, the student newspaper at The University of Texas at Austin, where she earned B.S., M.A. and PhD degrees, each with a 3.9

grade-point average. Her beloved alma mater also named her a Distinguished Alumna in 2003 and awarded her the Presidential Citation in 2013.

The owner of Zaffirini Communications, she also received 25 statewide and 5 national awards in 2016 from the Press Women of Texas (PWT) and the National Federation of Press Women. PWT also honored her with its 2016 Sweepstakes Award.

The Center for Health Care Services awarded Senator Zaffirini its Pinnacle of Achievement Award in 2015 for her advocacy for persons with mental, physical, intellectual and developmental dis-

abilities, and in 2016 Easterseals named her an Outstanding Advocate for her legislative leadership in improving the lives of persons with disabilities.

Senator Zaffirini's legendary work ethic is reflected in her having cast 55,666 consecutive votes and maintained 100 percent perfect attendance in the Senate since 1987, except for breaking quorum deliberately in 2003 to prevent an untimely redistricting that violated the Voting Rights Act.

The senator has been married to attorney Carlos Sr. for 51 years. Their son, Carlos Jr., an attorney and businessman, lives in Austin with his wife,

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Audrey. Carlos Jr. endowed scholarships in his mother's name at The University of Texas at Austin, Baylor College of Medicine and Texas A&M International University. He also established the Carlos Sr. and Senator Judith Zaffirini Access to Justice Initiative, which pays for bar review courses and exams for low-income UT law school graduates who will represent low-income clients.

The Beaumont Foundation endowed a scholarship honoring the Zaffirinis at A&M International, where the annual



FAMILY IS THE BEDROCK that underlies Senator Judith Zaffirini's commitment to public service, and what she wishes for her own beloved family is what she champions in the Texas Senate for all families in SD 21. Hers includes her husband, Carlos Sr.; their son, Carlos Jr.; and Carlos Jr.'s wife, Audrey.

Senator Judith Zaffirini Medal is presented to faculty members and students who excel in scholarship and leadership. Buildings bearing her name include a library at Laredo Community College, the student success building at A&M International, an elementary school at United ISD in Laredo and a drug treatment facility in Edinburg.

Senator Zaffirini is featured in 25 books and referenced in 19. Her story is told in *If Judy Pappas Can Do It, Anybody Can*, her booklet for elementary school students.