

**JOSÉ MENÉNDEZ***An Open Letter to the Citizens of Senate District 26***The Senate of The State of Texas****Senator José Menéndez**

District 26

**Dear Friends:**

Thank you for the privilege of representing you as your State Senator for Senate District 26. This session was unlike many others, where we faced unprecedented issues across our State. I had the pleasure of serving as a member of the State Affairs, Education, Administration, and Business & Commerce committees.

Based on input from our constituents, we were able to file over 100 pieces of legislation. We had over 20 pieces of legislation become law. Additionally, we offered over 50 amendments to a variety of bills presented on the Senate floor. This legislation came from suggestions provided by our constituents through calls, letters, emails, community forums, and visits to our offices.

This newsletter will provide a brief recap of the legislative session, ways to contact your Senate office, opportunities to meet with myself or staff, ways to engage with the community, and an overview of the legislative process, and community resources.

Please remember, this office belongs to you, the people of Bexar County. It is my hope that if we may ever be of assistance, you will contact us at 210-733-6604 or 512-463-0126 for the opportunity to serve you. Your health, safety, and well-being is most important to us—please take good care of yourselves, your families and your neighbors.

**Queridos Amigos:**

Gracias por el privilegio de representarlos como Senador Estatal por el Distrito del Senado 26. Este período de sesiones fue diferente a muchos otros, donde nos enfrentamos a cuestiones sin precedentes en todo nuestro Estado. Tuve el placer de servir como miembro de los comités de Asuntos Estatales, Educación, Administración y Comercio.

Basándonos en las aportaciones de nuestros electores, logramos presentar más de 100 propuestas legislativas y logramos más de 20 propuestas convertidas en ley. Adicionalmente, ofrecimos más de 50 enmiendas a una variedad de proyectos presentados en el Senado. Esta legislación provino de sugerencias proporcionadas por nuestros constituyentes a través de llamadas, cartas, correos electrónicos, foros comunitarios y visitas a nuestras oficinas.

Este boletín informativo proporcionará una breve recapitulación de la sesión legislativa, formas de comunicarse con su oficina del Senado, oportunidades de reunirse conmigo mismo o con el personal, manera de interactuar con la comunidad y una visión general del proceso legislativo y los recursos comunitarios.

Por favor recuerden que esta oficina les pertenece a ustedes, la gente del condado de Bexar. Es mi esperanza que si alguna vez podemos ayudarles, hagan contacto con nosotros al 210-733-6604 o 512-463-0126 para la oportunidad de servirles. Su salud, seguridad y bienestar es lo más importante para nosotros—por favor cúidense bien ustedes mismos, a sus familias y a sus vecinos.

Sincerely,

**José Menéndez**



# Working Together

## 2023 LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During this past legislative session, many of the ideas and concerns brought to Senator Menéndez came through community gatherings and events, newsletter responses, office visits, and phone calls. Senator Menéndez authored and coauthored over 45 bills that became law this past session. The legislation we filed and sponsored covers a range of topics such as education, healthcare, protecting older adults, voting rights, veteran benefits, and increasing access to higher education.

The best pieces of legislation come directly from YOU, the constituents of Senate District 26. Some of the bills we passed include:

- ★ **Senate Bill 576** – protects older adults and individuals from financial abuse by their caregivers.
- ★ **House Bill 568** – requires Alzheimer’s and Dementia training for peace officers, to ensure safe interactions for both the citizen and the officer.
- ★ **House Bill 2187** – includes an older adult or disabled individual into the protections from abandonment, assisting our most vulnerable.
- ★ **Senate Bill 629** – requires opioid antagonists in public schools to assist students who may experience an overdose in schools.
- ★ **House Bill 755** – limits prior authorizations for medication for autoimmune diseases to once annually, allowing for patients to receive their medication much sooner.
- ★ **House Bill 1337** – limits step therapy requirement for individuals who take medication for serious mental illnesses, removing unnecessary barriers to necessary medications.
- ★ **Senate Bill 1207** – ensures our Bexar County pension for firefighters and police officers.
- ★ **House Bill 4333** – reauthorizes the Bexar County Reflejo Court.
- ★ **House Bill 4759** – the Ramon Najero act allows individuals to report a dangerous dog without fear of retaliation. Unfortunately, the Governor vetoed this bill.
- ★ **Senate Bill 975** – removes barriers for older adults who would like to vote, although only have a personal identification card.



## Note to Teachers: We are Not Done!

Teaching is one of the most important ways to help children build a solid foundation, towards a successful future that ultimately creates a better world. However, the profession of teaching is both extremely challenging and far from adequately compensated, preventing our educators from keeping up with today’s soaring inflation. This is why we will continue to listen to the needs of our teachers and try to pass more legislation that will transform our education system into a better, more equitable pathway for all! In the meantime, here is what you need to know regarding what we passed during this past special session to help our retired teachers in this interim.

### Retired Teachers

Retired teachers hit the ground running this session in advocating for a long-overdue Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) after nearly two decades of waiting. While there was progress towards achieving this well-deserved salary increase, the next step to finally receiving their COLA is something voters will decide when they vote to approve HJR 2 from the 88th regular session at the ballots this November. Additionally, HJR 2 will provide a 13th check to all retired teachers who are age 70 and older. Texas has dedicated \$5 Billion to retirees in this financial package. In the case of both the COLA and 13th check, the details of the benefits change depending on age or date of retirement. We have broken down eligibility details below:

#### Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLAs) Eligibility

*\*(contingent upon the passage of the HJR 2 constitutional amendment; if approved by voters in November 2023, COLAs would start in January 2024)*

- retired September 1, 2013 through August 31, 2020\* 2%
- retired September 1, 2001 through August 31, 2013\* 4%
- retired on or before August 31, 2001\* 6%

#### 13th Check

*\*(must be within specified age group on any day in the calendar month before the payment is made, payment expected in September 2023)*

- TRS annuitants aged 70-74 \* \$2,400
- annuitants aged 75 and older \* \$7,500



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## UPDATE ON PROPERTY TAX REFORM

We were also able to pass the state's largest property tax relief plan in Texas history, which is the product of hard labor and bipartisan discussions across two special sessions.

The \$18 billion deal will provide relief for homeowners and businesses across the state by reducing the school property tax rate, add a three-year pilot program that would provide appraisal caps for non-homesteaded homes, raise the homestead exemption to \$100k, and cut franchise taxes for small businesses. We also passed a constitutional amendment that will be sent to voters in November 2023 to implement the changes made in this plan.

## HJR 2 will be on the November 7, 2023 ballot for voters to approve:

Increasing the homestead exemption from \$40,000 to \$100,000 for over 5.72 million Texas homeowner's property tax bills for this year;

Approving a "catch-up" for over-65 and disabled adults for the \$15,000 homestead exemption increase adjustment from the May 2022 state election.

Approving a 3-year circuit breaker pilot program for non-homesteaded real property valued at \$5 million or less. These properties will see a 20% cap on appraisal increases.

Adding three county citizens to be elected to each County Appraisal District (CAD) board of directors for non-partisan positions.

Permitting the CAD board of directors to select Appraisal Review Board (ARB) members in each county of 75,000 population or greater; and

Ensuring property tax relief does not count towards the constitutional spending limit.

Provide a 13<sup>th</sup> check to all retired teachers who are age 70 and older. Texas has dedicated \$5 Billion to retirees in this financial package.



## Calling All Small Businesses in District 26 – "Tell Us Your Story"

We are proud of our small local businesses and we want to put a spotlight on our hero entrepreneurs who have helped keep our economy running! Keeping our community thriving is our goal and we'd like to showcase the entrepreneurial spirit of our small business owners by sharing your personal stories. If you are interested in being featured on our social media, please contact our office at 210-733-6604 or by email at [district26.menendez@senate.texas.gov](mailto:district26.menendez@senate.texas.gov) and tell us everything you want us to know about the history and mission of your small business.

Thank you for your contributions to our community and we hope to hear from you!

## 7<sup>th</sup> Annual District 26 Older Adult Sweetheart Dance

Valentine's Day is a time for us to celebrate our loved ones and to express appreciation for everything they do! In honor of the season of love, we held our 7<sup>th</sup> Annual District 26 Older Adult Sweetheart Dance on February 10<sup>th</sup> 2023 at San Antonio's Lucky Ballroom where party-goers put on their dancing shoes and celebrated! Many of our D26 residents were in attendance and had a fabulous time making new friends and great memories!

Thank you to everyone that attended and to our fabulous sponsors the Gonzaba Foundation, H-E-B, and AT&T for helping to make this event possible.

We look forward to our 8<sup>th</sup> Annual event coming in 2024!

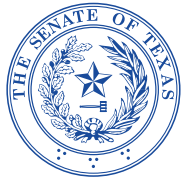


Salute to our College Graduates!

Attention D26 College Graduates and their Family:

## CONGRATULATIONS!

You did it and we are very proud of each and every one of you! To celebrate this tremendous milestone in your life, we would like to highlight your graduation success on our social media! Please email us a short note about yourself with a graduation photo, the name of your graduating College/University/Trade School, and any personal stories you would like to share or about your background or future plans. We would be honored to feature your accomplishments! In order to participate, please send your information to [District26Menendez@senate.texas.gov](mailto:District26Menendez@senate.texas.gov) or call us at 210-733- 6604.



## YOUR VIEWS ON ISSUES FACING TEXANS

Thank you for taking the time to read the Senate District 26 newsletter. Our best pieces of legislation come from you, our constituents! Please feel free to fill out the following items and share issues you believe we need to work on at our Texas Capitol. If you have any questions, feel free to call our office at (210) 733-6604.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Telephone Number (      ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Legislative Issue/Idea

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**DEADLINE: Thursday, February 1, 2024**



**Senator José Menéndez**

District 26

### HOUSING SUPPORT AND RESOURCES:

The housing market is rapidly changing, and many of you have called our office asking for information about available services for housing assistance, issues and needs. Below you will find a list of resources to help answer your questions and concerns. We would like to help in any way we can, so if you have additional matters to discuss, please call us at **210-733-6604** or **512-463-0126**.

**Thank you for continuing to allow our office to support you and your family's needs!**

#### Housing and Rental Assistance

#### Legal Services and Tenants Rights

- City of San Antonio's Housing Assistance Program (HAP) - **311** or **210-207-5910**
- Opportunity Home San Antonio - **210-477-6000**
- Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of San Antonio - **210-226-6178**
- San Antonio Alternative Housing - **210-224-2349**
- Residential Center for Veterans - **210-448-9714**
- Roy Maas' Youth Alternatives - **210-340-8077**
- Bexar County Department of Community Initiatives - **210-335-3666**

- Texas RioGrande Legal Aid (TRLA) - **956-996-8752**
- City of San Antonio's Right to Counsel Program (in collaboration with TRLA) - **210-212-3703**
- Bexar County Legal Aid - **210-212-3783**
- St. Mary's Center for Legal and Social Justice - **210-431-2596**
- Bexar County Dispute Resolution Center - **210-225-7837**

## Military Medals and Memoirs

**If you are a Veteran, we would like to take this time to express our unyielding respect and eternal gratitude for your service!**

Your dedication and commitment to the ideals of our democracy are an inspiration. We can never repay you or your families, for your courage and sacrifice in protecting our nation's freedom!

May we as a state and nation work together to live up to the ideals that you have fought for and somehow make you as proud and worthy as you have made each of us! Thank you for your service. We are here to help however we can!



(fold here)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State & Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE**

**Office of State Senator José Menéndez**  
**4522 Fredericksburg Rd., Suite A-22**  
**Balcones Heights, TX 78201**



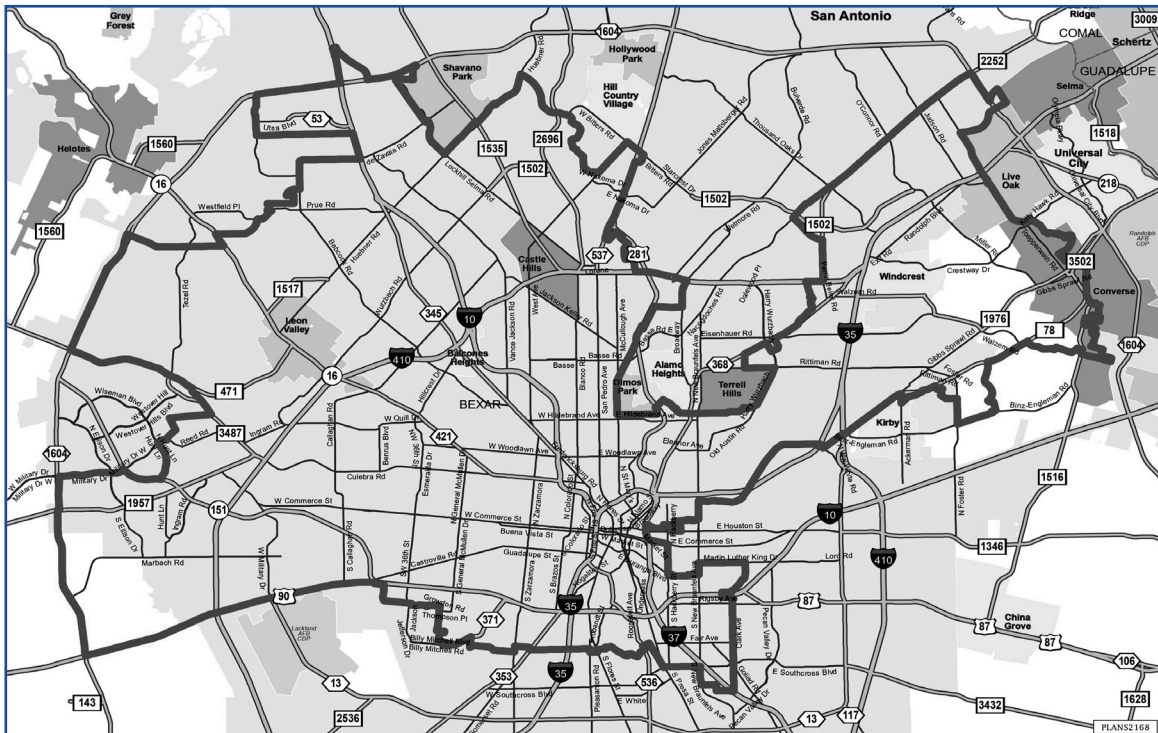
## Helpful Phone Numbers

The District 26 office works with various state agencies that serve Texas residents. If you, or anyone you know, needs assistance with a state agency, please do not hesitate to reach our office. We are here to help with any concerns that you may have. Listed below are some of the many agencies that our office works with every day. We can also be reached at 210-733-6604 if you have any questions about these agencies or need additional assistance.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Alcohol Establishment Concerns - Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC): <b>210-731-1720</b></li> <li>★ Capitol Tours (D26): <b>210-733-6604</b></li> <li>★ Child Protective Services (CPS): <b>1-800-252-5400</b></li> <li>★ Child Foster Care (CPS): <b>1-844-286-0769</b></li> <li>★ Child Support - Attorney General: <b>1-800-252-8014</b></li> <li>★ Children's Health Insurance - Health &amp; Human Services Commission (HHSC): <b>1-877-543-7669</b></li> <li>★ Consumer Protection - Attorney General: <b>1-800-621-0508</b></li> <li>★ Crime Victims Programs - Dept. of Criminal Justice (TDCJ): <b>512-406-5900</b></li> <li>★ Driver's License &amp; Identification - Dept. of Public Safety (DPS): <b>1-888-368-4689</b></li> <li>★ Adult Protective Services (APS): <b>1-800-252-5400</b></li> <li>★ Adult Foster Care (APC): <b>1-800-233-3405</b></li> <li>★ Dept. of Aging &amp; Disability Services (DAS): <b>1-855-937-2372</b></li> <li>★ Texas Long-term Care Ombudsman Program: <b>1-800-252-2412</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ Office of the Independent Ombudsman for State Supported Living Centers: <b>1-877-323-6466</b></li> <li>★ Environmental Issues - Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ): <b>1-877-901-0700</b></li> <li>★ Food Stamps - HHSC: <b>1-877-541-7905</b></li> <li>★ Mental Health &amp; Rehabilitation Services: <b>1-877-541-7905</b></li> <li>★ Professional Licensing - Dept. of Licensing &amp; Regulations (TDFLR): <b>512-463-6599</b></li> <li>★ State Resolutions &amp; Texas Flag Requests (D26): <b>210-733-6604</b></li> <li>★ Transportation Issues - Dept. of Transportation (TxDot): <b>210-615-1110</b></li> <li>★ Texas Veterans Commission - TVC hotline: <b>210-617-5300</b></li> <li>★ Disabled American Veterans (DAV): <b>210-699-5064</b></li> <li>★ Texas Workforce Commission (TWC): <b>1-800-628-5115</b></li> <li>★ Workers' Compensation - Dept. of Insurance (TDI): <b>1-800 252-7031</b></li> </ul> |
|---|---|

To mail questionnaire please cut along dashed line, fold, tape and place postage stamp.

# SENATE DISTRICT 26



## TEXAS SENATOR JOSÉ MENÉNDEZ

P.O. Box 12068  
Austin, Texas 78711-2068

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 2468  
AUSTIN, TEXAS

# THANK YOU!

*My family and I are grateful for the privilege of serving you. We appreciate your confidence and will continue to work tirelessly on your behalf.*

*Please contact me whenever I may be of assistance.*



### JOIN US AT THE DISTRICT 26 DECEMBER HOLIDAY PARTY:

Our Holiday Party Toy Drive is right around the corner and we would love for you to join the fun! We will be announcing the date and time soon, so please check in with us by calling 210-733-6604.

210-733-6604 District Office ★ 512-463-0126 Capitol Office  
4522 Fredericksburg Rd, Ste. A-22, San Antonio, TX, 78201 (located in Wonderland of the Americas)