



# The Senate of Texas

**CÉSAR J. BLANCO**

TEXAS SENATOR  
DISTRICT 29

**Press Release**

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**Contact:** Taylor Sanchez

[Taylor.sanchez@senate.texas.gov](mailto:Taylor.sanchez@senate.texas.gov)

## **Senator César Blanco Passes Bill to Modernize UTEP Student Union**

**Austin, Texas** – The Texas Senate has passed House Bill 2853, sponsored by Senator César J. Blanco and authored by Representative Vince Perez, to support the expansion and modernization of the Student Union at The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP).

The bill raises the cap on the student union fee, last set in 1987, to help finance the demolition of the current facility and construction of a new, modern building better suited to meet the needs of UTEP's growing student population. The student body voted to support the incremental fee increase in a campus-wide referendum in September 2024.

### **Senator Blanco issued the following statement:**

"When I was a student at UTEP, the Student Union was where we crammed for exams, organized student events, and grabbed a bite between classes. But even back then, it felt outdated. It's always been the heart of campus, but now it's finally getting the investment it deserves."

"UTEP is one of the fastest-growing research institutions in the country, and its facilities should reflect that momentum. I'm proud to help bring to life a vision that is shaped by student voices that honors the past while building for the future. This new Union will be a hub for connection and Miner pride for years to come."

### **Representative Vince Perez, issued the following statement:**

"The student union facility was built shortly after World War II, and generations of UTEP students have walked its halls, studied in its spaces, and built lifelong memories there. At that time, UTEP was a small institution of just 3,000 students; today, it's a nationally recognized university with an enrollment exceeding 25,000. This bill will deliver the modern, state-of-the-art facility our students need and deserve, supporting their success for generations to come. I'm honored that this was my first bill in the Texas House, and I'm proud to see it successfully through the legislative process. I'm also tremendously grateful to UTEP President Heather Wilson, whose tireless advocacy was instrumental in this bill's passage, and to Senator Blanco, who skillfully shepherded it through the Senate."

### **UTEP President, Dr. Heather Wilson, issued the following statement:**

"I am deeply grateful for the leadership of Sen. César Blanco and Rep. Vince Perez in supporting the vision of the students of UTEP. Without them, this important work ensuring students have excellent facilities supporting their education would not have happened."

### **UTEP Student Government Association President, Edgar Loya, issued the following statement:**

"The UTEP Student Union is in desperate need of an update. I am so thankful for the support from our elected officials to make this happen, and especially the leadership from Sen. Blanco and Rep. Perez. We are glad that the Texas legislature supported the outcome of our student vote to improve this important student resource."

House Bill 2853 now heads back to the House for concurrence.