



### Helpful Resources for Students and Parents

It is never too early to start planning for college. If you are in high school, have a plan. Make sure you stay on track with a college preparatory curriculum – four years of math, four years of social studies and at least three years of science. Visit colleges. Talk about careers. Make sure you know the deadline for the SAT and college applications. And be sure to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

There are many resources on the web to help guide you through this exciting journey. Here are just a few:

- [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov)
- [www.collegefortexans.com](http://www.collegefortexans.com)
- <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/>
- [www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae)



Congressman Hinojosa speaks at a press conference on higher education affordability.



Congressman Hinojosa discusses the importance of reading with local elementary school students.

#### Edinburg Office:

2864 West Trenton Road  
Edinburg, Texas 78539  
Phone: (956) 682-5545  
Fax: (956) 682-0141

#### Beeville Office:

107 South St. Mary's Street  
Beeville, Texas 78102  
Phone: (361) 358-8400  
Fax: (361) 358-8407

Visit us on the web at: [www.house.gov/hinojosa](http://www.house.gov/hinojosa)

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**Congressman Rubén Hinojosa**  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

MC  
Prsrt Std

## Congressman Rubén Hinojosa

### Fighting to Expand Educational Opportunities for Our Nation's Students



Dear Friends:

Last year ushered in a truly historic time in American history. Not since I started in Congress have I seen such an incredible opportunity to tackle the educational needs of our nation.

This session, I am in a special position to help the residents of the 15th Congressional District. I'm honored to be the new chairman of the House Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness. This subcommittee has jurisdiction over student financial aid, adult education and workforce training. Our business is to make sure that all Americans – regardless of race, gender or age – can develop their talents and contribute to our great country.

In this update, you will learn about legislation I have authored that will expand the educational opportunities available to all our nation's students. I hope you will come away with a better idea of the investments we are making that will impact Texas and our nation for years to come.

Sincerely,

### In This Issue:

Making College Affordable

Improving Science Labs

Funding CD 15 Schools

The High School Dropout Crisis

Achieving the American Dream



## CONGRESSMAN HINOJOSA *Is fighting to Expand Educational Opportunities for All Texans*

### Making College More Affordable for Texans

Like so many Americans, I have been deeply troubled by the skyrocketing cost of college. In the last five years alone, tuition has increased almost 40%. I am proud to report that Congress has taken a major step toward making higher education more affordable. In September, both the House and Senate approved historic legislation that will help more low-income students who are qualified go to college. **H.R. 2669, the College Cost Reduction Act**, makes the single largest investment in college financial aid in more than a generation. It invests more than \$20 billion over the next five years and pays for itself by reducing subsidies paid to lenders in the college loan industry.

The bill will:

- Guarantee a minimum increase of \$1,090 in the maximum Pell Grant over the next five years.
- Cut interest rates from 6.8% to 3.4% on subsidized student loans over the next four years.
- Invest \$200 million over two years in Hispanic-serving institutions, which enroll almost half of all Hispanic college students.
- Provide tuition assistance to students who commit to teaching in at-risk public schools.
- Offer loan forgiveness for graduates who choose public service professions such as nursing, law enforcement and teaching.



Congressman Hinojosa discussed the importance of higher education with Edcouch-Elsa High School students in Washington, D.C.

### Helping Adults Achieve the American Dream

For centuries, the American Dream has called many to our nation's shores. However, at present, the dream is fading for far too many because they lack the necessary language skills and understanding of our country's civics.

According to the U.S. Census, 23 million adults in the United States do not speak English well. At the same time, most ESL programs have waiting lists, some as long as three years. We must do more to ensure that everyone is provided the opportunity to fully participate in American society.

To help achieve this goal, I have introduced **H.R. 2214, the Adults Achieving the American Dream Act**. This legislation will greatly enhance adult education, English as a second language (ESL) services and civics education. It will ensure that more men and women have the chance to seek a better life in our nation.

### Combating America's High School Dropout Crisis

One of the most distressing trends occurring in our education system is the steady disappearance of students from our public schools.

Currently, about one-third of all high school students drop out before graduation. The situation is even worse for our minority youth. Only about half of African-American and Latino students graduate on time, compared to 78% of white students.

That is why I have introduced **H.R. 2928, the Graduation Promise Act**. This legislation sets aside \$2.5 billion each year to reform "dropout factories" – the estimated 2,000 high schools in America where more than 40% of students fail to graduate.

It is in our nation's best interest to find a way to keep more of our poor and minority students in school. The standard must be that every student graduates – otherwise, we as a country have failed them.

### Securing Millions for the 15th Congressional District

Already this year, I have secured more than \$5 million in funding to improve education in the district. These education grants include two multimillion-dollar awards:

- Edinburg's Region One Education Service Center – Awarded a three-year, \$1.9 million grant to improve the quality of American history education.
- University of Texas-Pan American, Coastal Bend College, South Texas College, Texas State Technical College – Awarded over \$1.7 million under the Upward Bound Program to help low-income, first-generation students prepare for college.



At a recent hearing on higher education, Congressman Hinojosa discussed funding for minority serving institutions.

### Improving High School Science Labs

For more than 150 years, lab experiments have been an essential ingredient in a comprehensive high school education. Unfortunately, the quality of today's lab instruction and facilities is woefully inadequate. Our future leaders are being deprived of the education they need to properly develop their talents.

This year, I authored a bill that will help modernize our high school labs. **H.R. 524, the Partnerships for Access**

**to Laboratory Science Act, or PALS, will authorize a \$5 million grant to enhance science labs and teaching in high-poverty schools.**

I am proud to report that in August the President signed PALS into law as part of the America Competes Act, which means we are on our way toward reinvigorating high school science classes.



### Fast Facts: The College Cost Reduction Act

#### Low- to Middle-Income Students Who Benefit

Increase in maximum Pell Grant scholarship over five years	.....\$1,090
Students who receive Pell Grant scholarships each year	.....5,500,000
Additional students who would become Pell Grant eligible	..... 600,000

#### Savings for Students and Their Families

Students in the U.S. who take out need-based federal loans annually	..... 6,800,000
Students in Texas who take out need-based federal loans annually	..... 205,508
Current interest rate on federal student loans	..... 6.8%
Interest rate reduction by 2011 thanks to H.R. 2669	..... 3.4%
Amount saved by average student borrower over the life of the loan	..... \$4,400

#### Total Increase in Loan and Pell Grant Aid Over the Next Five Years

Students in Texas	..... \$2,175,219,000
Students in the U.S.	..... \$28,141,101,000