



2017 Federal Legislative Agenda

Cybersecurity

Support legislative and regulatory steps to improve cybersecurity, without causing significant erosion of privacy rights.

Education and Workforce

REAUTHORIZATIONS

- Reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act while maintaining accountability standards; preserving performance benchmarks; and outlining concrete recommendations on how to narrow the achievement gap for historically underserved students.
- Reauthorize the Higher Education Act and increase funding for work study, community colleges, student scholarships, job training, and the Pell Grant.
- Reauthorize the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act in support of high-quality CTE programs that align with local and regional workforce needs.

FINANCIAL AID

- Support robust Pell Grant funding to include summers, flex and high-need, and high-wage non-credit course eligibility
- Increase funding for key programs including Strengthening Institutions Program, Hispanic Serving Institutions, TRIO, and Gear Up.
- Increase federal investment in workforce development, career and technical education (CTE) and job training and adult basic education in the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Healthcare

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Oppose efforts to repeal the ACA or to reduce protections provided to individuals who receive health insurance coverage through the ACA, to include the “Essential Health Benefits” provision of the ACA.

INTEROPERABILITY

Support legislation that encourages improving health IT interoperability and data analytic opportunities, minimizing inefficiencies in the current system.



VETERANS' HEALTHCARE

- Support efforts to expand and improve healthcare options for veterans, including within the Department of Veterans Affairs and its established relationship with William Beaumont Army Medical Center and by linking VA healthcare with Federally Qualified Health Centers, the Department of Defense and private-sector providers who can increase capacity.
- Support H.R. 1371: Vet Connect Act of 2017, sponsored by Congressman O'Rourke, to authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs to disclose private healthcare information to non-VA entities that provide hospital care or medical treatment to veterans.
- Support elimination of the VA's academic affiliate waiver process, which adds unreasonable delays on top of a protracted contracting process.

FUNDING FOR UNINSURED CARE

Support the Texas Health and Human Services Commission's renewal application for the 1115 Waiver without funding reductions. Maintain the Medicaid DSH program at current federal funding levels and further advocate for additional funding sources to ease local government entities' burden in providing care to the uninsured.

Immigration and Border Affairs

IMMIGRATION REFORM

- Support the development of a multi-layered approach to immigration reform that includes increasing the number of federal enforcement personnel and the utilization of new technologies to improve border security and efficiency.
- Promote legislation that provides a better mechanism to allow employers to fill legitimate temporary labor needs while providing appropriate labor protections and oversight.
- Facilitate and expedite the immigration of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) professionals.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

- Support outreach and coordination by federal agencies with trade community stakeholders to improve cross-border efficiency and security in the movement of goods and people between the U.S. and Mexico.
- Support resources to reduce northbound and southbound inspection time at our ports of entry including public/private partnership legislation for staffing, technology, and infrastructure.
- Support efforts to work with Mexican Customs officials to improve northbound lane segmentations for passenger cars, buses, and commercial trucks that are enrolled in trusted traveler programs such as Global Entry, SENTRI, and FAST.



- Support funding for technology based solutions to track and reduce wait times at our ports of entry.
- Support the provision of adequate funding for CBP Officers to staff trade related ports to reduce overtime requirements placed on local governments.
- Support streamlining of customs entry documentation to include passenger/pedestrian inspections and preclearance processes for commercial traffic.
- Support approval of multilateral trade agreements that will allow American commerce to enjoy priority in emerging markets before other, smaller trade agreements arrive to change the landscape to something less favorable for American business.
- Support efforts to improve the North American Free Trade Agreement, specifically those that would strengthen the trade relationship between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.
- Oppose the Border Adjustment Tax and any additional taxes on imports from Mexico.

Infrastructure and Transportation

- Advocate for water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure to be an integral part of any major federal infrastructure legislation.
- Support enhanced federal investment in transportation assets and funding for a long-term Surface Transportation Re-Authorization Bill.
- Support efforts to secure additional funding for multimodal transportation for our region.

Innovation

REGULATORY REFORM

Position: Support legislation that recognizes the cheapest way to carry out regulatory processes is not necessarily the best, while also reducing the regulatory state's power over emerging business and technology.

PATENT REFORM

Position: Support comprehensive patent reform and protection for companies accused of patent infringements by certain non-practicing entities.

Military Affairs

REGIONAL MILITARY TRIAD

- Support initiatives that will advance the complimentary capabilities of the region including those related to training, modernization, jointness/shared services, and medical services.
- Support any efforts to improve and consolidate management of the region's airspace.



VETERANS' AFFAIRS

- Support legislation and initiatives within the Department of Defense, Department of Labor, Department of Commerce and the Department of Veteran's Affairs that will streamline the transition process for military members exiting the Armed Forces and looking for employment/inclusion in the civilian workforce.
- Support funding for a Veterans Business Outreach Center in El Paso.
- Support efforts to expand and improve healthcare options for veterans, including within the Department of Veterans Affairs and by linking VA healthcare with private-sector providers who can increase capacity.
- Support elimination of the VA's academic affiliate waiver process, which adds unreasonable delays on top of a protracted contracting process.

FUNDING

- End sequestration and appropriate funds for the military branches to adequately support their missions.
- Increase Army Force Structure to 520,000.
- Support Military Construction (MILCON) funding requests from Fort Bliss.
- Oppose efforts to reduce benefits for service members.

MODERNIZATION

- Support Joint Modernization Command and the continuation of the Capabilities Integration Evaluation (CIE) and Joint Warfighting Assessment (JWA) exercises at Fort Bliss.
- Support federal policies and programs that adequately fund and prioritize Soldier-centered modernization and procurement of proven technologies so that Soldiers have the best weapons, equipment, and protection to accomplish the missions of the Armed Forces.

BRAC

- Encourage Congress to consider a future BRAC round in order to identify inefficiencies and eliminate unused facilities with the goal of alleviating some of the pressures placed on military installations following recent reductions in military and civilian end strength, force structure, and industrial base demand. Not instituting a BRAC will continue to divert scarce resources away from training, readiness, and family programs.
- Support BRAC legislation with criteria that takes into account community investments and infrastructure, as well as community/military partnerships.