

To: Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee

Date: Tuesday, March 3, 2026

From: The Honorable Sylvia R. Garcia (D-TX-29)

Re: Member Testimony for L-HHS-Ed Appropriations Subcommittee Member Day

Thank you, Mr. Chair, Ranking Member, and Committee Members, for the opportunity to provide written testimony for the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee Appropriations Member Day.

This is an important opportunity for Members of the House of Representatives to advocate for our constituents, highlight funding priorities, and help shape the appropriations process for Fiscal Year 2027.

As such, I would like to highlight a few of the top programmatic and language requests that I submitted to the Subcommittee that would have a significant impact on the lives of my constituents in Texas's 29th Congressional District.

These requests would help expand necessary programs for local communities and provide them with access to previously unavailable resources. Although I could continue about the many programs that my district relies on, below are a few of the standout federal programs that my constituents benefit from and value.

I worked with my colleagues in the House of Representatives in advocating for federal investments to improve health workforce programs, specifically the Title VII workforce program,

which would fill gaps in the supply of health professionals and respond to the needs of underserved populations.

I also request robust support for community health centers that provide critical and high-quality health care to low-income families and communities of color. Relatedly, I also urge the Subcommittee to lower costs for hard-working families by supplementing and funding programs that invest in healthcare professionals, specifically those placed in rural and underserved communities.

By bolstering funding for the Hospital Preparedness Program, we can help local communities adequately respond to future extreme heat events. This funding would ensure adequate staffing and coordination capabilities to address health care and public health surges during extreme heat events, such as extreme heat and wildfire smoke.

Related to heat, I also request that any recipients for federally-funded Public Health Preparedness Programs work with state, local, and tribal health agencies to make sure that they prioritize the integration of response, preparedness, and mitigation measures to extreme heat and wildfire smoke into the activities funded through this program.

The HeatRisk Initiative serves as an important impact-based forecast planning tool to enable early interventions that reduce illness and death during periods of dangerous heat. Its integration has become a critical component of emergency response planning and efforts to make America

more resilient in the face of extreme heat events. That is why I request robust funding for, as well as the proper maintenance and expansion of, the HeatRisk impact-based forecast tool.

I also support robust funding for the Hispanic Ph.D. Pilot program that will amplify academic opportunities for Hispanic Ph.D. students, such as graduate research experience and mentorship programs. This program will help bridge the gap for historically underrepresented student populations.

Similarly, I also support the robust funding of programs that would provide legal services for unaccompanied children. Housed through the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), these legal services include legal orientation presentations, legal screenings, and full legal representation for children, current or previously released for ORR care. This funding will increase efficiency, basic fairness, and significantly reduce the failure-to-appear rate, while also reducing the backlog.

I also voice my support for the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) by funding programs that would strengthen worker protections, including protections from workplace harassment, and strengthen employees' rights to organize and collectively bargain.

In addition, my requests would enhance critical services for unhoused individuals, especially runaway and homeless youth, through robust funding of children and family services programs. I support increasing resources for childcare and family planning services, especially robust funding for sexual health services and Title X programs. This community also includes unhoused

veterans who have been underserved by our government. As such, robust funding for the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program is a necessity. This program focuses on reintegrating veterans into the labor force and addressing systemic issues facing homeless veterans.

Helping veterans and our service members includes helping their families and children. Many of the children in my district, especially those who come from underserved backgrounds, rely on Head Start programs for quality education, nutrition, and health services. These programs help children in poverty, those coming from foster care, or experiencing homelessness. In addition, these programs also help their families, providing their parents or guardians with employment and educational support.

Individuals with disabilities also require and deserve federal funding and support. That is why I support robust funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Funding for this program would help states and local school districts that consistently have access to limited resources be able to better provide support for their disabled students.

Finally, my district includes a lot of seniors, who rely on Social Security and the Social Security Administration (SSA) for their pensions and living expenses. Robust funding for SSA would provide vital income for retirees, workers who have experienced injury or illness, and families who have lost their head of household. Protecting Social Security is a must, as it is the cornerstone of American economic safety.

Together, these requests have the potential to transform the lives of hard-working families, children, veterans, seniors, and other vulnerable communities in my district and across our nation.

I look forward to working with all the Members of the Subcommittee in advancing these priorities that are not only important to my district, but also to working families, children, and seniors across our great nation.