



## CAN Community Council Meeting Minutes, 9/17/2018

**Community Council Members in Attendance:** Thomas Martinez, Hunter Ellinger, Gloria Souhami, Aletha Huston, Leslie Puckett, Monica Gúzman, Sandra Castillo, Nora Comstock, Nancy Gilliam, Laura Griebel, Kirsha Haverlah, Myneeka Holloway, Carmen Luevanos, Ara Merjanian, Caroline Reynolds

**Guests in attendance:** Joseph Reynolds, Giomara Cintrón, Marianne Martinez, Rudy Metayer, Kerrie Judice, Representative Donna Howard, Representative Gina Hinojosa, Chelsea O'Hara, Michael Hole, Deece Eckstein, Astrid Duenas-Caldas, Valerie Menard, Erica Anthony-Benavides, Danny Castro, Alexander Holland, Samantha McCandless, Cathy McHorse, Teresa Perez-Wiseley, Ellen Richards, Jennifer Tucker, Barbara Mink

**CAN Staff:** Raul Alvarez, Jelina Tunstill

**Call to order & announcements:** Laura welcomed everyone to the Legislative Forum for the Community Council meeting. She wanted to recognize those in attendance that were representing the CAN Board and the CAN Community Council and had them raise their hands.

**Child Poverty Report Presentation:** Raul started off the meeting with a brief data presentation to frame the conversations that would take place later in the meeting. He noted that the Community Council worked through 2018 to learn about families and children living in poverty.

**Presentation and Discussion: Preview of 2019 Legislative Session:** State Representative Donna Howard and State Representative Gina Hinojosa discussed their priority issues for the upcoming 2019 Legislative Session.

### Whole Group Q&A:

**Were there any interim studies being conducted that pertain to the issues you all have brought up?**

Rep. Hinojosa - A commission has been meeting through the interim and doing work, but there hasn't been much support from the head of that commission for expanding available money.

Rep. Howard - There are a lot of groups on school safety, opioids. Also, there were a lot of groups throughout the interim that will preview what will be brought up in the legislature. If it is an interim charge, you can guarantee someone is interested.

**Where do you see the money coming from to increase the available money?**

Rep. Howard - We are an overall low tax state. We have one of the highest property taxes and one of the highest sales taxes, but because we don't have an income tax we are dependent on the other two which causes them to be high. We over-rely on property tax to pay for public schools. The last budget we passed, the state share has gone down by 50% since 2008. We pay completely for charter school kids because they don't have taxing authority, so they are basically public schools, whereas a district school only gets a third of that support. If you take charter schools out of the equation, the state share goes down to 32%. The TEA Commissioner is proposing a drop in those funds from 38% to low 30s. The property tax will continue to go up, the state share will continue to go down, and the burden is being caused by a dysfunctional funding formal that's being caused by the legislature. How do we fix that? Being honest about the budget, looking into the rainy day fund, don't continue to erode the franchise tax, expanding the base of what is taxed. There are no easy answers.

**There's a lot of oil and gas refining on the coast, the people with Texas Instruments and National Instruments in Texas seem to want a diverse and stable workforce. I believe they need to be the ones to get in there and lobby for diversity and the strength of education.**

Rep. Hinojosa - There is an effort now to bring in more of a business voice in education funding. For instance, the business voice was strong, unified, and organized in opposing the bathroom bill last year, and it worked. She anticipates that this issue may reemerge in 2019. She was disappointed during the interim. She sits on the economic development and small business committee. They had the business community come to talk about what they need, and they all talked about taxes and keeping them low, none of them mentioned education. She felt that this was short-sighted. She passed a bill last session for Public Benefit Corporation, which requires corporations to have a sustainable model and not be based on short term success.

Rep. Howard - We know that healthy families are going to be able to participate more in economics than unhealthy families. It's really looking at the whole system and what supports the communities' health. One thing I've asked from AISD is about what philanthropic streams they have coming in. We aren't counting that when we look at funding equity for our schools/kids.

**How do you communicate the state of important legislation to your constituents? What other tools are needed from collaboratives, like ours, to help get the message out about important legislation that you all are working on?**

Rep. Hinojosa – Her office created engagement teams for budget and education, for being freed from fear of discrimination, from threats to safety, and from local control. They had meetings throughout session, and called on people to work on things throughout the session. They plan to have innovative engagement options for the next session as well. If you sign up we will contact you to be engaged.

Rep. Howard – One of the things the Travis County Delegation did was to host an event at the millennium center. Approximately 1000 people who showed up. We brought in groups to talk about different issues to give people an opportunity to learn about them. We are fortunate, geographically, that we are in the state capitol. You can come testify. The committee system requires that you post specific times at which specific issues will be discussed. Because meetings often do not start on time, you may have to wait hours to be heard. We have a responsibility to represent people in other parts of the state. It's a challenge. We need to make that process easier for you to do your civic duty. Social media is used a great deal to inform constituents. It's an insider thing because people use different social medias for different things. I use twitter and facebook. We tried infographics. We created a graphic on "How to Testify," "How to Talk to your Legislator" and we post videos to summarize what happened that week in the legislature.

**Breakout Sessions:** After panel, each panelist visited table groups for small group Q&A.

**Participant Feedback:**

**What did you learn about community needs in Travis County that you would want others to know?**

- The importance of programs for at risk youth and the poverty level in the minority population.
- The failed bill that would reallocate money for high school moms to get childcare to stay in school.
- People need to understand and empathize with the fact that poverty is a "quiet" affliction.
- Child poverty is being reduced, but we have a long way to go.

**Is there something that you heard or an idea that you have about what needs to be done to address this issue (or issues) that should be shared with the CAN Board, legislators, or other stakeholders?**

- To create affordable childcare services. It would open opportunities for moms to go back to school/work. Early sex education because increasing education decreases birthrate.
- Talking about it more.
- Oversight and regulation of charter schools.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.