



2023 END-OF-YEAR
REPORT

JOAQUIN CASTRO



CONGRESSMAN FOR THE 20TH DISTRICT OF TEXAS



Dear Neighbor,

The start of a new year is an exciting time to think about the future. As we look ahead to 2024, I'm grateful to represent San Antonio and eager for the progress ahead.

Over the past two years, San Antonio residents have seen many reasons to be excited about the future. As the economy has rebounded and life has returned to normal, new jobs have brought a better quality of life to thousands of families.

Earlier this year, San Antonio was named one of the fastest-growing cities in the country. Our city's future is bright, and I want to make sure no one is left behind as we grow.



In June, I joined Prosper West to celebrate the completion of the first Casa Bella affordable home on **West César E Chávez Boulevard**.

This year, I worked closely with **Our Casas Residents Council** and **Prosper West San Antonio** on major new **Westside** affordable housing initiatives to repair homes for seniors and rehabilitate older properties for first-time homebuyers. I've also pushed to bring more federal funding home to support our schools, including through a \$2 million grant to hire student success coaches to support math and literacy education in San Antonio public schools.

Throughout my time in public service, my focus has been on what I call the **Infrastructure of Opportunity**. I believe that just as there's an infrastructure of transportation that helps us get where we want to go on the road, there's an Infrastructure of Opportunity that helps us we want to go in life. It's that Infrastructure of Opportunity — great public schools and universities, a sound health care system, and good jobs — that opens the door for people to pursue their American Dreams.



I have great memories from my time living off **General McMullen** while my dad taught at **Kennedy High School** and my brother and I attended **Hoelscher Elementary**. It was fun to visit with the next generation of students and parents at this year's **Edgewood ISD** back-to-school fair.

In San Antonio and Washington, my offices are here to serve you. If you have any questions, please reach out by calling **210-348-8216** or visiting **Castro.House.gov**.

Thank you,

Joaquín Castro

CONSTITUENT SERVICES

Every year, my office is proud to help thousands of San Antonio residents get the results they need from the federal government. **Here's a quick look at my constituent services in 2023:**



811 constituent cases **resolved successfully.**



\$3.1 million in federal benefits recovered for constituents, including more than \$352,000 from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

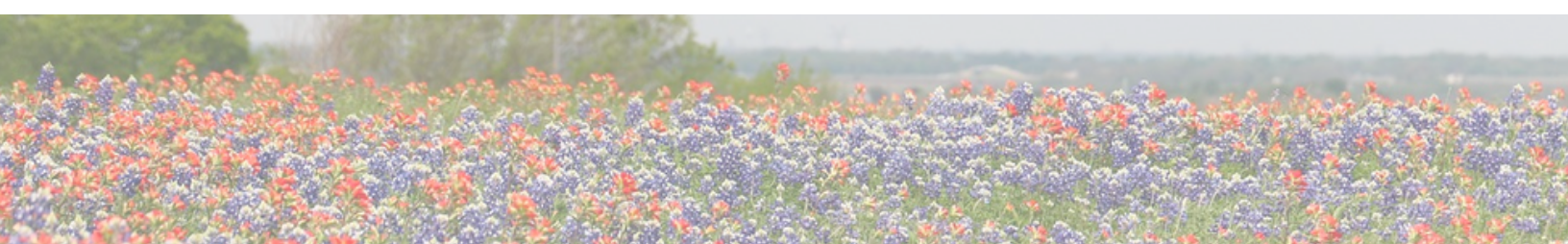


\$521 million in federal grants for programs and services in San Antonio.

Need help with VA benefits, Medicare, Social Security, or other government services? **Give my office a call at 210-348-8216**



In August, my office worked with the **South Texas Veterans Health Care System** to help hundreds of veterans get screened for toxic exposure at the **North West San Antonio VA Clinic**. To learn more about benefits and programs for veterans exposed to toxic substances during their service, visit [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT).



Success Stories

During the Vietnam War, San Antonio native and **Lanier High School** graduate Adolfo Aguilar made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

When Adolfo's service medals went missing, my office secured replacement medals for his brother, Dario Aguilar, and the Aguilar family.

This fall, I was honored to hold a medal presentation ceremony for the Aguilar family to commemorate Adolfo and his service.



“The Congressman and his staff were so gracious – they took the time to do this on behalf of my family, and I know how my mom and dad would feel and how proud my brother would be. I got the chance to talk to the Congressman about San Antonio and the Westside, and it was like talking to a neighbor. I really appreciate what he and the entire office did for my family.”

-Dario Aguilar

Jennifer Terrazas is part of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which allows her to work and contribute to our community. She submitted her DACA renewal in May, but processing was severely delayed and she lost her job when her status expired. After she reached out for help, my office got her DACA status renewed within a few days.

“About 2-3 days later, I got my approval notice because Congressman Castro's office was able to help and find out why I wasn't able to be approved as fast as I used to be. I was able to reapply to my job and they were able to take me back, and now I'm back at work.”

-Jennifer Terrazas

As post-pandemic travel returned to normal levels, the State Department faced an unprecedented demand for passports. To help San Antonio residents avoid delays, **my office partnered with the District Clerk of Bexar County, Gloria A. Martinez, to host a community passport fair** and help families apply for passports.

While passport processing times have now returned to pre-pandemic levels, my office is always available to help with passport and visa issues.



During our passport fair with **Clerk Martinez** at the **Northside Activity Center**, my office **helped more than 100 San Antonio residents** with the passport application process. If you need help with passport or visa issues, please give my office a call.

HONORING OUR HEROES

Captain Le Roy Torres, a longtime Texas state trooper and Iraq War veteran, developed a severe lung condition after he was exposed to toxic burn pits during his deployment. After his diagnosis, Captain Torres and his wife Rosie turned their adversity into advocacy and founded *Burn Pits 360*, an organization that fights for veterans who were exposed to burn pits and other toxins, including Agent Orange.

Last year, I worked with the Torres family to pass the *Honoring Our PACT Act*, the largest expansion of VA benefits in decades. The PACT Act expands health care and support for generations of veterans who were exposed to toxins during their service.

In recognition of their tireless fight for America's veterans, I nominated the Torres family for the Presidential Medal of Freedom, our nation's highest civilian honor.



GRANT FUNDING

Every year in Congress, I'm proud to get millions of dollars in federal funding for programs and services in San Antonio. Here's a look at some of the grant funding my office brought home this year:

\$20 Million to Expand San Antonio Airport

- I worked with partners in San Antonio's congressional delegation to get \$20 million to expand airport operations and capacity at San Antonio Airport. The expansion will improve passenger experiences and bring jobs and business to our city.

\$1 Million to Expand Passenger Rail

- I got \$1 million to support the study and assessment of passenger rail development connecting San Antonio to Houston and Houston to Dallas. I'm also pushing for more funding to support high-speed rail between San Antonio and Austin.

\$2 Million for Math and Reading Tutoring

- I worked with Congressman Greg Casar and AmeriCorps to get the funding to hire 58 student success coaches, who will work with San Antonio students on math, literacy, and socio-emotional skills.

\$150,000 to Support San Antonio Small Businesses

- I helped to get \$150,000 for the LiftFund Business Support team, which helps low-income and minority entrepreneurs develop financial knowledge and qualify for access to capital, including low-interest loans.

\$100+ Million to Support Servicemembers and Military Families at Joint Base San Antonio

- As part of this year's defense bill, I supported more than \$100 million for investments at JBSA, including \$20 million for Child Development Centers and \$90 million for a center to support spiritual respite on base.

\$38 Million to Relieve Migration Pressures

- As San Antonio works to support migrant families who pass through our city, I got \$38 million to fund migrant services provided by the City of San Antonio, Catholic Charities, and United Way.

AROUND TOWN



In November, I joined San Antonio veterans at Northside ISD's Leon Valley Elementary School to talk with students about the meaning of Veterans Day.



This summer, I kicked off the Congressional App Challenge at San Juan de Los Lagos Parish with students who spent their days immersed in STEM lessons at a Girls Inc. Eureka! summer camp

LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Investing in San Antonio Students

San Antonio public schools put me on track to a bright future, and I want all students to get a great education. This year, I've sponsored a number of education bills, including:

- The **Advanced Coursework Equity Act**, which would help school districts enroll more high-achieving but underrepresented students in advanced courses.
- The **HERE Act**, which would build partnerships between school districts and colleges in Latino communities to help students prepare for college.
- The **Reverse Transfer Efficiency Act**, which would help community college transfer students continue to earn credit toward an associate's degree, reducing the number of students who leave school with debt but no degree.



In February, I welcomed leaders from the **Alamo Colleges District** to Washington to talk about strategies to increase Pell Grant funding and invest in workforce programs.

I've also pushed Congress to pass **\$16 billion in federal support for childcare programs** to expand affordable childcare and help more childcare workers earn a living wage.

Supporting Small Businesses and Creating Jobs

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and I'm committed to helping San Antonio's entrepreneurs succeed. This year, I've sponsored bills focused on small businesses and job creation, including:



In September, I welcomed the first class of entrepreneurs at the **UTSA Procurement Academy**, a new program to help San Antonio small businesses win public contracts. The Academy is supported by \$576,000 in funding that I got for UTSA last year.

- The **Expanding Opportunities for Diverse Entrepreneurs Act**, which would expand the reach of a federal program that help small, women-, and minority-owned businesses compete for federally-funded transportation contracts.
- The **Transparency in Government Contracts Act**, which would support Congressional efforts to improve federal contracting with small businesses. This summer, the House of Representatives also passed my bipartisan amendment to require greater transparency in federally-funded airport contracting projects.

Protecting San Antonio's History and Heritage

San Antonio's history is part of what makes our city so special. After recent acts of vandalism at the **San Antonio Missions**, I pushed the National Park Service to work with state and local partners on a plan to protect the missions for centuries to come.

I was also proud to join **Councilwoman Teri Castillo**, **Mayor Nirenberg**, and the Mexican American Civil Rights Institute (MACRI) in a push to designate **Emma Tenayuca Memorial Way** in **Southtown** to honor an often-overlooked San Antonio civil rights hero.



In October, I joined the **Mexican American Civil Rights Institute** for the grand opening of the **MACRI Visitor Center on Buena Vista Street**, which will highlight San Antonio's central role in the history of Mexican American civil rights.

Protecting Social Security

San Antonio's seniors work hard and pay into Social Security with the promise that it will be there to support them in retirement. **I'm committed to protecting Social Security**, and I'm a proud sponsor of the Social Security 2100 Act, which would improve benefits for seniors and repeal the five-month waiting period for disability benefits.

Preventing Fentanyl Abuse and Trafficking

As part of my foreign affairs work, I've pushed to **stop fentanyl trafficking** to keep San Antonio residents safe from fentanyl exposure. In May, the House Foreign Affairs Committee passed my bipartisan amendment to increase collaboration between the U.S. and Mexico to promote **public health campaigns that reduce drug use**. I've also supported new smart technologies at the border to help curb cross-border fentanyl smuggling.

Improving Access to Affordable Health Care



In July, I joined the **American Kidney Fund** community health equity training in San Antonio to talk about improving health care, especially through access to affordable insulin and diabetes treatment.

Last year, I was proud to vote for the Inflation Reduction Act, which expanded premium subsidies to **help most people to get a health care plan for less than \$10/month** on the Affordable Care Act marketplace exchange.

The Inflation Reduction Act also **capped the cost of insulin at \$35/month for seniors**. I believe that everyone should have affordable care, and I will keep pushing for improvements to our health care system to make that possible.



CELEBRATING ARTS AND CULTURE

Celebrating San Antonio's Young Artists

Each year, members of the U.S. House of Representatives hold congressional art competitions in our districts to highlight the work of promising young artists.

This year, the winner of our competition was Hogai Qasmi, a senior at **Northside ISD's Brandeis High School**. I'm also proud of our second and third-place winners from **North East ISD's International School of the Americas** and Brandeis High School

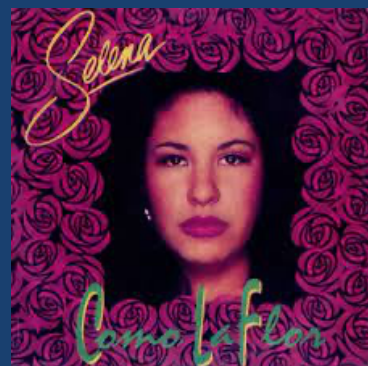


Hogai's Qasmi's winning piece, "Modern With Traditional"

Honoring Latino Music and Film

For several years, I've been working to preserve Latino films and music in our national archives and highlight Latino contributions to American culture. This year, two of my nominations, Irene Cara's "**Flashdance...What a Feeling**" and Daddy Yankee's "**Gasolina**" became a permanent part of the National Recording Registry.

In 2021, the iconic movie **Selena** became part of the National Film Registry at my suggestion. In the coming years, I want to see more of San Antonio's music and stories preserved for future generations.



Funding Arts and Literacy Programs

In February, I was proud to join **Centro Cultural Aztlan** and the **Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center** to announce more than \$200,000 in federal funding to support arts and literacy education on San Antonio's Westside.

I grew up on the Westside, and I'm proud to bring these new programs home to serve San Antonio students.



NEED HELP? HAVE QUESTIONS?

CONSTITUENT CASEWORK:

My San Antonio office can help you with issues related to the federal government, including:

- Medicare and Social Security denials or delays.
- VA programs, including health care, education, and housing.
- Small business loans and support through the Small Business Administration.
- Passports, visas, and immigration issues.
- Questions related to the Department of Defense, including relocation allowances, sign-on bonuses, and more.

GET IN TOUCH:

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