

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



ROBERTO R. ALONZO
District 104

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

CONTACT:

Rep. R. Alonzo (214-329-3397)

Jesse R. Bernal (512-463-0408)

Marty Alvarado (214-942-7104)

**Rep. Alonzo is Appointed to Co-Chair
Latino Higher Education Task Force;
Texas House of Representatives**

AUSTIN, TX - Texas State Representative Roberto R. Alonzo (Dallas) has been named Co-Chair of the newly created **Task Force on Higher Education** for the **Mexican American Legislative Caucus (MALC)**, a 42-member caucus of policymakers within the Texas House of Representatives.

"I am indeed honored that the MALC leadership has appointed me to co-chair this very important Task Force on Higher Education in the House of Representatives. I am indebted to MALC Chairman Pete Gallego for having the trust and confidence in me to lead this crucial task force, especially at a time when higher education issues in general, and the needs of Latinos in particular, continue to take the spotlight as priority policy issues that we must adequately address if the State of Texas is to be well-equipped, globally competitive, and technologically-prepared to face the most pressing issues facing all citizens, not only in our own state but across the entire nation," said Rep. Alonzo.

In making his appointment of Rep. Alonzo, MALC Chairman, Pete P. Gallego, stated: "As you know, higher education is a critical issue for the State of Texas. The Latino community's access and successful completion of higher education programs must be emphasized in order for Texas as a whole to succeed... This Task Force will focus on the unique challenges, and possible solutions, faced by Latino students."

"Education at all levels, including accessibility of a college education for all students, has consistently been one of my legislative priorities in the Legislature, and I continue to keep that at the top of my agenda. Since I already serve on the House Higher Education Committee, it is my hope that with my service as Co-Chair of this MALC Task Force, I will be in an even more influential position to ensure that all colleges and universities in Texas adequately and effectively address the needs of all students, educators, and communities alike, particularly our growing Latino population. As I have always emphasized, I want to ensure more financial aid resources are accessible for all students to be able to afford a quality education, graduate from college, and become productive citizens of society. I also want to ensure that we do more to lessen the gap that currently exists between minority and non-minority students attending college, not only in Texas but across the U.S. And finally, I want to ensure that we do more as a state to increase diversity among our campuses, by enrolling more Latinos and other minorities in our institutions, while at the same time, encouraging more minorities to assume high-ranking collegiate positions that will serve as a role model for future generations. Latinos have now become the majority population in Texas, but yet many of our colleges and universities still continue to show a disparity in diversity, both among student bodies and college professors. That concerns me," continued Rep. Alonzo.

CAPITOL OFFICE:
P.O. Box 2910, GN.09
AUSTIN, TX 78768-2910
(512) 463-0408
(512) 463-1817 FAX
(866) 449-5770 TOLL FREE

DISTRICT OFFICE:
400 S. ZANG BLVD.
SUITE 801
DALLAS, TEXAS 75208
(214) 942-7104
FAX (214) 942 8104

As part of his role as Co-Chair of the **MALC Task Force on Higher Education**, Rep. Alonzo and the other Co-Chair, Rep. Joaquin Castro of San Antonio, will have an opportunity to conduct site visits at various higher education institutions across the state in order to have discussions with higher education officials, students, and faculty regarding some of the most pressing issues facing Texas. While the specific dates and site visits have not been finalized yet, the MALC Task Force proposes to solicit ideas and opinions from higher education experts, faculty, students, organizations, and other interested parties that will allow MALC policymakers to help formulate thoughtful, sound, and reasonable legislation in preparation for the 2009 Regular Session of the 81st Texas Legislature which convenes for its biennial 140-day session in Austin come January 13, 2009.

In addition to Co-Chairs Alonzo and Castro, other legislators named to the **MALC Task Force on Higher Education** include: Rep. Lon Burnam (Fort Worth); Rep. Chente Quintanilla (El Paso); Rep. Eddie Rodriguez (Austin); and Rep. Solomon Ortiz, Jr., (Corpus Christi).

Preparing to return for his sixth 2-year term in the Texas House in 2009, Rep. Alonzo remains confident that he will be able to use his policy-making expertise, veteran legislative experience, and networking relationship with key lawmakers from all regions of the state, to advocate important legislation and pass significant measures that will improve the quality of life for all Texans, including those from the DFW region and North Texas.

"I am honored and privileged indeed to serve the people of the DFW area, North Texas, and particularly those from the Oak Cliff, Grand Prairie, Arlington, and surrounding communities, by serving as Co-Chair of the MALC Task Force on Higher Education, a legislative policy area that I am certain will have positive lasting impact, not only specifically for constituents of House District 104, but for all Texans statewide. I cannot wait to roll my sleeves, and start the preparation for the public hearing process, site visits, and other activities that will come with service as part of this important MALC Task Force ," concluded Rep. Alonzo.

Earlier this year, Rep. Alonzo received recognition by being named as the **2008 Champion of Higher Education** award recipient by the Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce (TAMACC), and the **2008 Meritorious Service Award** recipient by the Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education (TACHE), during their annual state conventions respectively, for his advocacy work on behalf of higher education issues in Texas. And earlier this month, the Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD) Board of Trustees presented him with an official proclamation for his advocacy work in the DFW region.

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