



City of San Antonio

Legislation Details (With Text)

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Type: Miscellaneous Item

In control: City Council A Session

On agenda: 10/5/2017

Title: An Ordinance approving amendments to the City of San Antonio's Federal Legislative Program for the 115th U.S. Congress. [Carlos Contreras, Assistant City Manager; Jeff Coyle, Director, Government & Public Affairs]

Sponsors:

Indexes:

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Attachments: 1. Federal Program Proposed Amendments, 2. 115th Fed. Program Amended_DRAFT, 3. Draft Ordinance, 4. Ordinance 2017-10-05-0760

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
10/5/2017	1	City Council A Session	adopted	Pass

DEPARTMENT: Government and Public Affairs

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Jeff Coyle

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City Wide

SUBJECT:

115th Federal Legislative Program Amendments

SUMMARY:

Amendments to the City of San Antonio's 115th Federal Legislative Program

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Development of the City's federal initiatives for the 115th Congress began in August 2016 in collaboration with City departments and the City's Federal Consultant team, and City Council adopted the 115th Federal Legislative Program on January 12, 2017. The 115th Federal Legislative Program focuses on three City legislative priorities and thirteen legislative and federal agency initiatives.

A. Priorities

The City's Federal Priorities include federal funding and/or legislative action for the following initiatives:

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization: The City seeks a nonstop flight to Ronald Reagan

National Airport (DCA). San Antonio is the 7th largest city in the U.S. and is the largest medium-hub market located outside the DCA perimeter that is not served by a non-stop flight to DCA. Non-stop access to DCA for markets beyond the perimeter is an important economic driver for business and tourism growth. A non-stop route serving the San Antonio International Airport (SAT) to DCA is a key link for the federal government due to the significant presence of civilian and military agencies in San Antonio.

Military Protection: Protecting, enhancing, and growing the military missions in San Antonio is a priority of our City. Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA) is comprised of four primary locations in the San Antonio region and is home to several high-priority missions. These include the 24th Air Force “Cyber Command,” basic training for all enlisted Air Force personnel, the Medical Education and Training Campus, and instructor pilot and Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) training. San Antonio’s military supports 266 military service mission partners, more than 80,000 personnel, and the region is home to more than 250,000 veterans. We support funding and programs that allow for the protection of our current missions and the acquisition of new ones.

Transportation Funding: The City seeks funding that will support the infrastructure needs associated with the significant population growth expected over the next 25 years. In anticipation of this growth the City developed a multimodal transportation plan which takes into account all modes of transportation including; auto, freight, rail transit, biking, and walking. The plan will serve as a tool to prioritize and meet the community’s transportation infrastructure goals.

B. Legislative & Agency Initiatives

Legislative and agency initiatives focus on issues that align with City priorities and enhance the City’s continued commitment to leverage national resources and partnerships. The City’s federal legislative efforts include the protection of municipal interests, identification of federal funding to support local investments, and advocacy to ensure that federal resources continue to be available for San Antonio.

The following legislative and agency initiatives are included in the program:

- **Public Safety Enhancements** - Support full and expanded funding to support state and local law enforcement and public safety
- **Municipal Bond Tax Exemption** - Oppose changes to the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds
- **Employment Tax Credits** - Support the extension and expansion of tax credits for businesses that hire in economically distressed areas
- **Historic Tax Credits & Downtown National Register District** - Obtain a historic designation for San Antonio’s urban code, leverage tax incentives to preserve and protect the area, and obtain federal grants and technical assistance for historic preservation
- **San Antonio Missions/National Park Funding** - Support a federal funding increase for operations and maintenance of the San Antonio Mission National Historical Park
- **Marketplace Fairness Act** - Support passage of the Marketplace Fairness Act to bring uncollected sales taxes to the state
- **Public, Education & Government Access** - Support the expansion of allowable uses of PEG funds to improve public access channel operations

- **Teen Pregnancy Prevention** - Support funding restoration to proven teen pregnancy prevention programs
- **Workforce, Education & Training** - Support programs which assist the development of highly skilled and in demand occupations
- **Smart Cities Implementation** - Support funding for technology integration initiatives which will improve City services
- **San Antonio Tricentennial** - Engage with national leaders to gain support, participation, and funding for events and activities highlighting the San Antonio Tricentennial
- **Homeless Services for Individuals with Mental Illness** - Support programs and resources for the development of effective systems to address the chronically homeless population
- **Air Quality** - Support policies, programs, and resources which allow the region to improve its air quality, reduce the health impacts of pollution, and meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards

On January 20, 2017, Donald J. Trump was inaugurated as the 45th President of the United States. The new administration's agenda has provided a break from many of the previous administrations' policies and budget priorities. As such, potential legislative reforms that were not previously up for discussion - such as the renegotiation of the North America Free Trade Agreement - are now front and center in the Congressional discourse.

To adapt to changing conditions in the federal government and better address the issues of importance to the San Antonio City Council, staff recommends four amendments to the 115th Federal Legislative Program. These amendments will provide staff with direction to work with the Federal Consultant team and the Congressional Delegation to advocate on behalf of the City on issues of importance to City Council.

The Intergovernmental Relations Council Committee approved these amendments at their meeting on September 13, 2017.

ISSUE:

Staff proposes amending the 115th Federal Legislative Program to include four additional items: (1) addressing the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA); (2) preparation for a possible round of Base Realignment & Closure (BRAC); (3) support for anti-trafficking and anti-smuggling programs and grant funding; and (4) support for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival Program (DACA) participants.

North American Free Trade Agreement

Staff recommends adding the renegotiation of NAFTA as a City of San Antonio federal program item. This amendment will position the City to continue to work with the business community, stakeholders and the Congressional Delegation to advocate for the modernization and improvement of NAFTA, and to ensure NAFTA continues to strengthen the local economy.

In May 2017, the United States began the process to renegotiate NAFTA. The notice triggered a 90-day consultation period after which negotiations between the U.S., Mexico, and Canada could begin. Negotiations began in August and efforts are underway to reach agreement on changes to the trade agreement by the end of 2017, as well as passage by the three countries' legislative bodies by early 2018.

San Antonio, regional and statewide stakeholders recognize that NAFTA has resulted in significant economic benefit to the local and state economy. The renegotiation of NAFTA presents an opportunity to update and improve the agreement, in recognition of fundamental changes to industry and business that have occurred since the original agreement was signed twenty-three years ago.

Base Realignment & Closure (BRAC)

Military Protection is already included as a priority in the City's 115th Federal Program. However, with the possibility of a new round of Base Realignment & Closure (BRAC) during the next several years, staff recommends amending the Military Protection language to specifically discuss BRAC and the City's desire to maintain and grow the military missions in San Antonio. This amendment will help ensure the City is positioned to prepare for and respond to a BRAC.

Since City Council adoption of the 115th Federal Legislative Program in January 2017, President Trump has expressed support for a BRAC and the Department of Defense continues to support a BRAC to reduce excess military infrastructure. It is expected that there will be continued efforts to initiate a BRAC process in the coming months. Joint Base San Antonio's (JBSA) installations contribute nearly \$50 billion annually to the local and state economy. JBSA has a footprint of 55,000 acres, employs approximately 80,000 personnel and trains 152,000 students a year.

This amendment will ensure the City is equipped to support actions that will increase Joint Base San Antonio's (JBSA) military value by promoting the strategic importance of JBSA's current, unique military missions that are indispensable to national defense as well as highlighting San Antonio's military friendly atmosphere and superb training environment and facilities. These activities will help ensure San Antonio will be in the best possible position to absorb additional military missions from other military installations during a future BRAC.

Anti-trafficking and anti-smuggling support & grant funding

Staff recommends the addition of language in the 115th Federal Program to support federal programs and funding that help combat human trafficking and smuggling. The I-35 and I-10 corridors through Texas continue to be utilized as a human trafficking and smuggling route. In July, a group of immigrants were found in a locked truck trailer after having been left trapped for hours. Many were rescued but ten individuals ultimately died due to the heat in the trailer.

The San Antonio Police Department coordinated and assists state and federal officials in anti-trafficking initiatives and has participated in the Department of Homeland Security's Blue Campaign to combat human trafficking. Through the proposed amendment the City would further explore opportunities to receive support from the federal government to stop human trafficking and smuggling in the region.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival Program (DACA)

Finally, staff recommends an amendment to the federal program in support of congressional action extending the DACA Program or providing lawful status to certain undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children. This amendment will position the City to join others advocating for Congressional action that enables undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. as children to earn lawful status.

In September, President Trump announced his decision to end the DACA program. On September 5, 2017, Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Duke issued a memorandum rescinding the June 2012 memo that

established DACA, and setting forward a plan for phasing out DACA over the next six months. DACA was established by the Obama Administration in June 2012 and allows certain individuals who entered the country as minors to receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation and eligibility for a work permit. Approximately 800,000 such young people were enrolled in the program as of 2017.

According to the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, if DACA were to end, there would be 645,145 unemployed DACA recipients and \$3.4 billion in unnecessary turnover costs for business and employers. Eighty-seven percent of DACA recipients are currently employed with American businesses. DACA recipients contribute 15.3 percent of their wages to taxes, which fund Social Security and Medicare, and DACA recipients are investing in assets like houses, and starting new businesses, bringing significant tax revenue to cities and states.

A permanent solution for individuals covered by DACA has bipartisan support in Congress. The U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) and the National League of Cities (NLC) are active advocates of DACA and have asked Congress for the extension of DACA and a long-term immigration solution for these individuals. This amendment to the 115th Federal Program will equip the City to support the DACA participants.

ALTERNATIVES:

City Council could choose to not accept the recommended amendments and/or propose additional amendments to the 115th Federal Program.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with this item.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends City Council support of the four proposed amendments to the City's 115th Federal Program.