



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

**File Number:**17-5733

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**Agenda Item Number:** 2.

**Agenda Date:** 10/30/2017

**In Control:** Intergovernmental Relations Committee

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**DEPARTMENT:** Government and Public Affairs

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** Jeff Coyle

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** City Wide

### **SUBJECT:**

Federal Legislative Update

### **SUMMARY:**

Briefing and update on federal legislative issues and the September 2017 Intergovernmental Relations Committee trip to Washington, D.C.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

#### IGR Committee DC Trip

The Government and Public Affairs Department coordinated a September 26-27, 2017, visit to Washington, D.C. attended by IGR Committee Chair Rey Saldaña and Councilmember Manny Pelaez. The Department scheduled meetings with federal agencies and elected officials to discuss several priorities for the City of San Antonio, including: Tax reform, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, human trafficking, teen pregnancy prevention, and funding for public safety and transportation infrastructure. Trip participants also met with National League of Cities leadership while in D.C. The IGR Committee will receive a briefing on the outcome of the meetings as well as action steps that have taken place following each meeting.

#### Federal Legislative Program - Coordination with community partners

The Government and Public Affairs department conducts outreach to other city departments and local private and public partners in the development of the Federal Legislative Program. In August of 2016, in preparation for the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, GPA requested input and priority issues from all City Departments as well as local partners, including Bexar County, the Alamo Area Council of Governments, the San Antonio Chamber of

Commerce, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Outreach was also conducted to major businesses in San Antonio such as USAA, Valero, HEB, AT&T, Toyota, and others. Additionally, in order to maintain open lines of communication with local partners, GPA hosts a quarterly ‘roundtable’ meeting with government affairs staff with San Antonio stakeholders. Participants in the roundtable include CPS Energy, SAWS, Bexar County, VIA, San Antonio Housing Authority, SAMCo, San Antonio River Authority, Port San Antonio, and Brooks.

At the request of the IGR Committee, to further seek opportunities to partner with local non-profit organizations, GPA conducted outreach to the business and nonprofit community to obtain an update on federal priorities for their organizations. The committee will receive results from a survey provided to the City Department of Human Service’s delegate agencies.

#### Other Federal Issues

Councilmembers have requested updates on additional items and new developments have occurred in high-priority legislative program issues.

#### *Children’s Health Insurance Program*

The Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) was created in 1997 with bipartisan support and was designed to provide health insurance coverage for the children of families with low or moderate income. The program provides low-cost health insurance for approximately 9 million children. With Congress’s attention focused on attempts to reform or repeal the Affordable Care Act, the body failed to reauthorize the CHIP program and it expired on September 30, 2017. The responsible House and Senate committees have passed their versions of the CHIP reauthorization but negotiations are ongoing on funding the program. Already appropriated funds will allow most states to continue the program until the end of the year but a new reauthorization is needed to continue CHIP in the longer term. In 2015, 22,917 Bexar County individuals were enrolled in CHIP. The State of Texas has estimated that existing funding for CHIP could last until April 2018.

#### *Affordable Housing*

The City of San Antonio actively supports affordable housing funding and programs. In May 2017 the Trump administration released its proposed budget for 2018. The budget proposed to cut several longstanding programs which fund the rehabilitation and construction of affordable housing, repair and improvement of infrastructure in low income areas, promote economic development, and provide services to low-income youth and seniors. The administration proposed to eliminate the Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnerships, and the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative. Congress has rejected the administration’s proposed cuts to these programs in both the House and Senate’s appropriations bills. The City of San Antonio supports these programs and partners closely with the San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA), the local Department of Housing and Urban Development office, the National League of Cities, and U.S. Conference of Mayors to track and advocate for the continuation and improvement of programs which support affordable housing and the development of low and moderate income neighborhoods. SAHA is a partner entity in the City’s federal legislative program.

#### *Base Realignment and Closure*

House and Senate appropriations committees have passed the National Defense Appropriations Act (NDAA) for 2018. The House version included provision prohibiting a new BRAC. In the Senate, Senators McCain and Reed proposed an amendment which would have instituted a BRAC for 2021. The McCain amendment proposed a modified BRAC process which would have given Congress responsibility on the outcome of the BRAC by eliminating the independent BRAC commission and requiring Congress to authorize planned closures. However, due to bipartisan opposition, the McCain amendment was not considered. On October 6, 2017, after the McCain amendment failed, Secretary of Defense James Mattis sent a letter to Congress urging lawmakers to approve a new round of BRAC for 2021. In the letter Secretary Mattis states that a BRAC would provide opportunities for the military to be more effective and for savings to be applied to higher needs such as

readiness and weaponry.

#### *NAFTA*

On October 17<sup>th</sup> trade representatives from the U.S., Canada, and Mexico ended the fourth round of NAFTA renegotiation talks. Progress was made in a number of issues, however other proposals made by the U.S. have proven contentious. These include a five-year “sunset” clause for the agreement, requiring regular review of the deal; and a proposal to increase the percentage of an automobile which must be from within NAFTA member countries to qualify for tariff-free treatment from 62.5% to 85% with an extra requirement of 50% U.S. content. The parties agreed to extend negotiations into the first quarter of 2018.

Senator Cornyn, as chairman of the Subcommittee on International Trade, Customs, and Global Competitiveness, has scheduled a NAFTA field hearing for November 20, 2017 in San Antonio at the location of the 1992 signing of the agreement. COSA staff is coordinating with the Senator’s team.

#### **ISSUE:**

This item is for briefing purposes only.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

This item is for briefing purposes only.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact with this briefing.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

This item is for briefing purposes only.