



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Date: 1/21/2021

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Government & Public Affairs

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Jeff Coyle

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City Wide

SUBJECT: Federal Legislative Program for the 117th U.S. Congress

SUMMARY:

An ordinance to approve the City of San Antonio's Federal Legislative Program for the 117th Congress.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The United States Congress' 117th Session began on January 3, 2021. Prior to each congressional session, Government & Public Affairs (GPA) begins development of a legislative program with City Council input and approval. The program provides direction to GPA staff and federal consultants on the City of San Antonio's federal priorities.

Development of the City of San Antonio's new Federal Legislative Program began in August 2020 in collaboration with City Departments and the City's federal consultant team. GPA staff worked with the National League of Cities, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the San Antonio Congressional Delegation and community partners to identify issues important to the San Antonio community.

The Federal Legislative Program for the 117th Congress heavily prioritizes economic recovery and resiliency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is designed to be strategic and impactful, align with the priorities of the San Antonio community and help advance a resilient and sustainable city infrastructure.

The proposed Federal Legislative Program is comprised of the following priority issues.

Coronavirus Response: Support for direct, flexible funding assistance to cities dealing with the ongoing health response and economic community impacts.

Support relief assistance for small businesses and hard-hit industries, such as restaurants and bars, tourism/hospitality and arts entities, healthcare providers, schools and for food assistance.

Workforce & Training: Support federal partnerships to supplement and enhance the City's Ready to Work training and education initiative.

Support reauthorization and funding for traditional and emerging workforce, education and training programs for youth, adults and veterans.

Housing Assistance: Support the enhancement, expansion and flexibility of foreclosure and eviction prevention programs, affordable housing and home ownership programs and services through new funding sources.

Advocate for funding increases to programs such as the Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME), the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and other federal programs.

Broadband & Digital Inclusion: Support for federal funding to expand broadband infrastructure investments for low income and underserved communities to help increase residents' access to affordable broadband internet, devices and digital literacy.

Military Protection: Sustain and enhance Joint Base San Antonio's (JBSA) mission readiness and ensure the long-term protection of the region's military bases by helping to preserve, protect and grow military missions and installations in the San Antonio region.

Sustain and increase P4 and other partnerships with the region's military and pursue infrastructure funding through the National Defense and Authorization Act (NDAA) and appropriations process for off base projects and other programs.

Infrastructure Modernization: Support funding for the revitalization of communities through modern and sustainable infrastructure for surface transportation, safe streets to enable use and mobility for all users, aviation, housing, parks, broadband and innovative approaches to help address urban mobility challenges.

Support the City's transportation investments to help meet the community's transportation goals by identifying funding sources and advocating for funding increases in key programs, such as reauthorization of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and key grant programs, such as INFRA, BUILD and other infrastructure grants.

Aviation Improvements: Support an increase in Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funding and greater flexibility for the use of AIP funds.

Support raising or eliminating the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) cap of \$4.50.

Support Congressional changes to the Perimeter Rule and/or Slot Rule in order to secure a nonstop flight from San Antonio International Airport to Washington Reagan National Airport (SAT-DCA).

Support additional federal assistance for airports, and aviation partners, such as airport concessionaires and airlines in response to the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Health & Human Services: Support policies and programs to prevent domestic violence and funding for prevention education and intervention services.

Support policies and programs to curtail the use and abuse of dangerous substances in our community and

support funding for prevention education and treatment programs.

Support programs and resources to develop an effective system for chronically homeless individuals, and those who suffer from severe addiction and mental illness.

Support congressional action that enables undocumented immigrants who came to the U.S. as children to earn lawful status.

Support the Federal Refugee Resettlement Program to provide for the effective resettlement of refugees and to assist them to achieve economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible after arrival in the United States.

Public Safety Improvements: Support expanded funding dedicated to supporting public safety and enhancing transparency, engagement and accountability through traditional and emerging grant programs, domestic violence prevention, anti-trafficking/anti-smuggling programs, officer training programs and equipment.

Support comprehensive legislation to increase fire arm safety and prevent gun violence.

Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness: Support programs and increased funding to promote a multijurisdictional, multidisciplinary approach to regional prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and resiliency from a terrorist attack or natural disaster, such as FEMA's Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), Regional Catastrophic Planning Grant Program (RCPGP), and Assistance to Firefighters Grant and other related programs.

Community Revitalization: Support funding for the revitalization of cities and sustainable growth.

Support the reauthorization and funding for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) to rescue and rehabilitate significant historic sites, revitalize communities and create opportunities for economic growth.

Support the extension and expansion of tax credits for businesses that hire vulnerable populations from certain targeted groups, such as veterans and individuals impacted by COVID-19 and for employee retention through the Employee Retention Tax Credit.

Support historic tax credit enhancements (HTC) that help drive economic development through the restoration and reuse of America's historic buildings and the Federal Historic Preservation Easement program tax incentives.

Support affordable housing tax credits such as, the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC).

Support funding for the transition to renewable and clean energy.

On December 9, 2020, the IGR Committee received a briefing on the recommended priorities. The IGR Committee provided recommendations and approved the proposed program for full City Council consideration. City Council was briefed on the proposed Federal Legislative Program on January 13, 2021.

ISSUE:

The legislative program establishes the City's federal priorities for the 117th Congress. Adoption of the Federal Legislative Program is in line with City Council policy and does not preclude the submission and adoption of other initiatives that may be legislative and/or regulatory in nature. As issues and funding opportunities develop

further and additional grant opportunities become available during the 117th Congress, City staff will advise Council accordingly and obtain direction.

ALTERNATIVES:

City Council could choose not to adopt a Federal Legislative Program for the 117th U.S. Congress. This would be inconsistent with previous public policy set by City Council and fail to provide timely City Council guidance to staff. Council could alternatively provide direction on an issue by issue basis.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with the approval of this item.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the City's 117th Congress Federal Legislative Program.