

## **Brief on the Need for Additional State Funding for Border Communities**

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### **Introduction:**

Border communities in Texas play a critical role in the state's economy, serving as key hubs for trade, commerce, and cultural exchange. Despite their importance, these communities often face challenges related to underfunding, which stems in part from a population-based funding model that does not fully capture the unique dynamics of border regions. To support their continued growth and to ensure they contribute fully to the state's economy, it is essential to provide additional state funding to these areas.

### **Economic Importance of Border Communities:**

1. **Trade and Commerce:** Border communities are the gateway for international trade, particularly with Mexico, one of Texas's largest trading partners. Ports of entry in border cities like Laredo, El Paso, and McAllen are critical to the flow of goods, contributing billions of dollars to the state's economy. Increased funding would ensure that infrastructure and services in these communities can keep pace with the demands of international trade.
2. **Job Creation and Economic Growth:** Border regions are significant employment centers, not just for local residents but also for people from surrounding areas. The economic activities in these communities support jobs in logistics, manufacturing, retail, and services, which in turn contribute to state tax revenues. Adequate funding is necessary to sustain and expand these economic activities, directly benefiting the state's economy.
3. **Cultural and Social Contributions:** Border communities are rich in cultural diversity and serve as cultural bridges between Texas and Mexico. This unique position enhances the state's cultural richness and attracts tourism, further contributing to economic growth. State funding can help preserve and promote these cultural assets, making the region more attractive for visitors and investors alike.

### **Challenges of the Current Population-Based Funding Model:**

1. **Undercounting of Population:** The border areas often experience challenges in accurately counting their populations, partly due to high levels of mobility and transient populations. As a result, the current population-based funding model underestimates the actual number of people relying on public services, leading to insufficient funding for critical infrastructure, healthcare, and education.

2. Cross-Border Dynamics: Border communities frequently provide services to non-residents, including cross-border workers, tourists, and others who come into the area temporarily. These populations contribute to the demand for services but are not reflected in official population counts, leading to a mismatch between the needs of the community and the funding they receive.

3. Strained Public Services: Due to the undercounting of populations and the unique demands placed on border communities, public services such as healthcare, education, and law enforcement are often strained. Without additional state funding, these services will continue to struggle, which could negatively impact both local residents and the state's broader economic interests.

### **Conclusion:**

To support the economic growth of Texas and ensure that border communities can continue to thrive, it is imperative to provide additional state funding. These communities are vital to the state's economy, and their contributions far exceed what is currently captured by population-based funding models. By allocating more resources, the state can help these regions address their unique challenges, ensuring they remain strong contributors to the Texas economy while providing essential services to their residents and the many others who depend on them.