

RESOLUTION 2015-04

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF LA FERIA JOINING CAMERON COUNTY AND OTHER CITIES AND TOWNS THROUGHOUT CAMERON COUNTY EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE BILLS FILED OR TO BE FILED IN THE 84TH TEXAS LEGISLATURE BY SENATOR EDDIE LUCIO, JR., REPRESENTATIVE RENE OLIVIERA, AND REPRESENTATIVE EDDIE LUCIO III TO ALLOW THE VOTERS OF CAMERON COUNTY TO DECIDE ON THE CREATION OF A HOSPITAL OR HEALTHCARE DISTRICT IN CAMERON COUNTY WHICH TAX RATE WOULD BE CAPPED AT AN ABSOLUTE MAXIMUM OF \$0.25 PER \$100 VALUATION.

WHEREAS, Cameron County has a disproportionately large population of men, women and children who are uninsured and do not have adequate income or resources to pay for health care for themselves or their families;

WHEREAS, each community in Cameron County, including La Feria, Texas, has a substantial number of needy individuals either residing in or employed and working within its boundaries;

WHEREAS, the burden of providing health care for the indigent population is currently the responsibility of the Cameron County government and also falls on the shoulders of local hospitals and other private medical providers who treat and care for the needy for little or no compensation;

WHEREAS, under the Texas constitution and our laws, local voters can be given an opportunity to decide through an election whether to create a district, known as a hospital or healthcare district, to assume the responsibility from the county to provide medical care for the indigent population;

WHEREAS, compared to the rest of Texas and the United States, there is a severe shortage of primary care and specialty physicians, as well as most other health care professionals, throughout Cameron County and the rest of the Rio Grande Valley;

WHEREAS, throughout Texas, medical schools and hospital districts are partners in arrangements through which the medical school and its faculty play a critically important role in the medical care of indigent patients and the hospital district, through payments for those services, provides opportunities and support for the education and training of medical students and residents;

WHEREAS, to help address indigent health care needs in Cameron County and to support The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine, Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. and Representatives Rene Oliveira and Eddie Lucio III are willing to introduce bills in the 84th Texas Legislature to allow the voters of Cameron County to create a Cameron County Healthcare District through a local election if they choose to do so;

WHEREAS, the proposed bill does not actually create a hospital or healthcare district but instead reserves that decision exclusively to the voters of Cameron County in an election which may be held in the future for that specific purpose;

WHEREAS, as an additional safeguard for Cameron County taxpayers, the proposed bill will include an absolute maximum tax rate of \$0.25 per \$100 valuation (although most hospital districts across Texas have a cap of \$0.75 per \$100) and will also require the Cameron County Commissioners Court to lower its tax rate in the first year after the creation of a healthcare district to account for the reduction in Cameron County spending on indigent health care; and


WHEREAS, the elected members of the governing body of **La Feria, Texas** believe it is essential that the voters in their community and throughout Cameron County have the opportunity to make an informed choice about the creation of a healthcare district which could improve the quality of and access to medical treatment for indigent residents while, at the same time, enhancing education opportunities at the UTRGV School of Medicine and increasing the numbers of physicians and health care professionals available to treat the entire population of our county and region.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:

We, the elected members of the governing body of **La Feria, Texas** join Cameron County and cities and towns throughout our county in a showing and spirit of unity and cooperation and do hereby wholeheartedly and enthusiastically express our full support for the bills filed or to be filed in the 84th Texas Legislature by Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. and Representatives Rene Oliveira and Eddie Lucio III to allow the voters of Cameron County to choose to create a Cameron County Healthcare District through a future local election.

Be it further resolved that we applaud the efforts of Senator Lucio and Representatives Oliveira and Lucio to take bold action to improve healthcare in our community and to maximize the potential of our new UTRGV medical school while, at the same time, including protections for our local taxpayers.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS THE 28TH DAY OF APRIL 2015.



Victor Gonzalez, Jr., Mayor

ATTEST:



Olga Oberwetter, City Secretary

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Richard S. Talbert, City Attorney