

Senator Carlos Uresti

Where there is no vision, the people will perish - Proverbs, 29:18

This is the personal credo of State Senator Carlos I. Uresti, a leader for Senate District 19 and the State of Texas who envisions thriving communities, safe and healthy children, an educated workforce, and responsible growth. A lifelong resident of his district, he is deeply committed to the success of his constituents.

Senator Uresti represents the largest geographical senate district in the contiguous 48 states. Senate District 19 spans a 23-county area stretching along the U.S.-Mexico border, from San Antonio to El Paso County. Covering 55,000 square miles, the district contains 62 school districts; spans two time zones; and is larger than 24 states and 25 countries.

Born in West San Antonio and raised on the city's South Side, Senator Uresti and his twin brother, Larry, are the youngest of eight children.

After graduating from McCollum High School, Senator Uresti enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves at the age of 18 as a Private First Class. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and a Teaching Certificate from St. Mary's University, and was then commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant. Senator Uresti rose to the rank of Captain and earned the Navy Achievement Medal during his four years of active duty as a combat engineer. Since graduating from St. Mary's University School of Law in 1992, he has been in private practice in San Antonio, currently with the Uresti Law Firm.

Balancing career and family life is important to Senator Uresti. He raised his two sons, Michael and Carlos, Jr. in the same neighborhood in which he spent his formative years. Both Michael and Carlos Jr. graduated from McCollum High School and continued in their father's footsteps in their own way. Michael is a 2005 graduate of Texas A&M University-College Station and is currently attending law school at his father's Alma Mater, St. Mary's University. Senator Uresti became a grandfather on July 22, 2008, when Michael and his wife Jennifer welcomed their first baby, Benjamin Michael. Carlos Jr. graduated from McCollum in 2004 and followed his roots to the same military branch as his father. He is now a Corporal in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves and is attending Texas A&M University-San Antonio.

A 1997 special election to the Texas House of Representatives opened the door to state politics for Senator Uresti. He served in the House for nine years and was the chairman of the Committee on Human Services during the 78th Legislature and the Committee on Government Reform during the 79th Legislature.

Senator Uresti was elected to the Texas Senate in 2006, riding on his reputation as a champion of children, seniors, and veterans. During nearly a decade of public service, Uresti has authored, co-authored and sponsored numerous bills during both his House and Senate careers. Some of those bills provided:

Landmark reforms of the Child Protective Services (CPS) and Adult Protective Services (APS);

The creation of a statewide Blue Ribbon Task Force to create new policies and strategies to combat child abuse and neglect;

An expansion of the state's newborn screening program, which could save an estimated 150 children a year by testing for 20 additional genetic disorders.

A ban on clinical medical trials involving foster children or children in the juvenile justice system;

The statewide establishment of the Nurse-Family Partnership program for child abuse prevention;

The expansion of pre-Kindergarten funding for children of active duty military personnel in Texas;

The establishment of the Silver Alert system, modeled after the successful Amber Alert, to spread notice of missing elderly persons;

Authorization and funding for the Texas A&M University at San Antonio;

Economic development authority for military installations affected by Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC);

Economic incentives to attract industrial and manufacturing growth to San Antonio, including Toyota and Boeing;

Regulatory oversight of the state's guardianship system;

Bulk purchasing authority for discounted, State-purchased prescription medications; and

The privacy of veterans' service records following their discharge from the military.

Currently, Senator Uresti is co-chair of the Bexar Metropolitan Water District Legislative Oversight Committee, and is vice chair of two Senate Committees — Administration and Agriculture and Rural Affairs. He is also a member of the Health and Human Services, Natural Resources and Jurisprudence Committees. Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst appointed him to the National Conference of State Legislatures' standing Health Committee in 2007. He is also a member of the Southern Legislative Conference's Agriculture and Rural Development Committee.

Devoted to fighting child abuse and neglect as chairman of the House Committee on Health and Human Services, Senator Uresti led the charge to reform the Child Protective Services during the interim of the 78th Legislature, and brought statewide attention and major reform to protect our children from abuse and neglect. He continues to be a voice throughout Texas for the most vulnerable of our State.

Long active in his community, Senator Uresti is the founding chairman of the Blue Ribbon Task Force, a coalition bringing together hundreds of community activists and leaders to fight the causes of child abuse and neglect. He also sits on the Board of Trustees for Communities-In-Schools of San Antonio, which is the nation's largest community-based dropout prevention organization. Senator Uresti is also a member of the Board of Trustees for Wings for Life, a residential facility for at-risk teen mothers and their children. Each year Senator Uresti sponsors a Back-to-School and Health Fair in San Antonio and participates in similar events across the district. Since 2008, he has given away some 30,000 backpacks to students across the district.

A fierce advocate for veterans, Senator Uresti formed the Bexar County Veterans' Coalition in 2006. He is a lifetime member of Veteran of Foreign Wars Manuel Alvarado Post 9186, a member of the United States Marine Corps League, the American Legion, and the Alamo Silver Wings Airborne Association. In the 81st Legislature, Senator Uresti co-sponsored legislation granted a full homeowners property tax exemption to veterans who were 100 percent disabled from their military service.

He has worked diligently to encourage economic development within Senate District 19, including the Toyota manufacturing plant, the revitalization of Brooks City-Base, the Port of San Antonio, and the Texas A&M University campus in South San Antonio. Senator

Uresti is also a voting member of the San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Policy Board where is working to create a sustainable transportation infrastructure for the future of the region.

Senator Uresti has received more than 90 awards and recognitions, including *five* Legislator of the Year awards for his efforts to combat child abuse. Most recently, he received the Mentor of the Year Award from the San Antonio Young Lawyers Association and the Legislative Leadership Award from the Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce. The Harlandale Independent School District Council of PTAs awarded him a Lifetime Membership in the Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers, and the American Cancer Society honored him with the Texas Advocacy Award for his legislative advocacy on cigarette taxation.

For his work on reestablishing adequate funding for CHIP and children's Medicaid, and for his work toward increasing the number of medical residents and residency programs, the Texas Medical Association named Senator Uresti one of Texas Medicine's Best Legislators in 2007. He also received the 2008 "Champion for Children" Award from the Texas Coalition of Homes for Children and Texas CASA's Big Voices for Little Texans Award in 2009.