Testimony to Legislative Budget Board re School Funding

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Honorable Chair and Members:

Good morning/afternoon. My name is Christina Gonzalez and I live in San Antonio. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today.

Today, I want to talk about something that directly impacts the success of our children: SCHOOL FUNDING.

When we invest in our schools, we are investing in our children and in the future of our communities.

When my children returned to school after the pandemic shutdown, our school did not have enough funding to provide every student with a laptop. Since my son was in honor classes he received a device but my daughter, who was in regular classes, did not. This resulted in her falling behind and having to stay after school to catch up. We eventually pulled money out of our emergency savings to purchase a used laptop so that our daughter would have the same advantage as the few that were selected to receive devices.

This challenge caused emotional and mental stress on our home , and like many other families we were already barely hanging on from the impact of the pandemic. This experience made me feel like a failure as a parent for not being able to live in a better-funded school district. But ultimately, it was not my failure. It was the lack of funding that caused a delay in learning for many students, not just my child.

The Covid pandemic changed the way the schools function and what materials are now required to teach our children effectively, and although six years have passed, many schools still lack the funding to provide every student with the equipment they need to be successful.

When we properly fund all of our schools, we are saying that every child deserves an opportunity to succeed, regardless of their family's financial circumstances. We are

This advocate participated in programming that equips Texans most impacted by state budget decisions with the knowledge, skills, and support to advocate for policies that strengthen our communities.

giving teachers the tools they need to teach effectively, and we are giving students the resources they need to participate fully in their education.

Today, I ask the Legislature to substantially increase the basic allotment in the 2028-29 state budget. Increasing the basic allotment is the simplest way to provide an across-the-board funding increase that benefits all Texas public school students. In spite of the Legislature's investment in schools last session via HB 2, the basic allotment has been stagnant since 2019. The current amount, $6,160, should be raised to just over $8,000 merely to adjust for inflation since 2019. The more the Legislature falls behind in funding our schools, the harder it will be for our students to catch up.

Investing in education is an investment that reaches far beyond the classroom. The children sitting in our schools today will become the workers, parents, leaders, entrepreneurs, and community members of tomorrow.

If we want strong communities and a strong future, we have to give our children a strong foundation.

School funding is an investment in that foundation, in that future.

My story is not unique, but together we can make sure that it becomes less and less common.

Thank you for your time.