

EDITORIAL

Stepping up

Scholarship program pledge aims to raise more teachers for Valley

Fostering a future generation of teachers is essential to the academic growth and success of our future students in our state and Rio Grande Valley region. Therefore we applaud a generous new scholarship program announced Monday that will provide \$50 million over the next decade to help develop new teachers, including those in the RGV.

Funded by the Raise Your Hand Texas Foundation, the new Raising Texas Teachers program, will invest \$50 million through 2027 in scholarships at 10 Texas colleges, including the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

The program is part of H-E-B CEO and Chairman Charles Butt's \$100 million philanthropic pledge earlier this year to establish the Holdsworth Center, a leadership institute to help develop public school administrators.

Under Raising Texas Teachers, 500 teaching fellows will be selected from 10 university teacher preparation programs, including UTRGV's Student Teacher Education Preparation/University Partnership program, which is offered at the Edinburg campus.

Other universities selected include Rice, Southern Methodist University, Texas A&M University, Texas Tech, Trinity University, University of North Texas-Dallas, University of Houston, University of Texas Austin and Our Lady of the Lake in San Antonio.

We applaud UTRGV for being among universities selected "based on their capacity and commitment to deliver competency-based clinical preparation, and a willingness to establish strong collaborative relationships with districts where graduates teach," according to a news release.

This includes the local STEP UP program, which places teacher candidates in RGV schools for an entire academic year, which is "to allow for the bridging of theory to practice in authentic settings," said Criselda Garcia, associate dean for initial preparation programs and academic affairs at the UTRGV College of Education.

Each teaching fellow will receive \$8,000 per year as part of the Charles Butt Scholarship for Aspiring Teachers, and ongoing training and development opportunities, mentorship from sitting public school educators, and access to a statewide aspiring teacher network.

The program is expected to expand eventually to include leadership development opportunities for the state's top high school students who are interested in teaching careers, as well.

"Research consistently shows that the strength of the teacher makes the biggest difference in influencing a student's success," Charles Butt said in a statement. "To improve academic achievement, it is critical that Texas elevate the status of the teaching profession, strengthen the existing pool of aspiring teachers, and inspire our most talented high school graduates to consider a career in teaching."

We're very grateful that he is such a believer in education.

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This newspaper is dedicated to giving our readers accurate, relevant and timely news and entertainment. We hope to provide local residents and leaders information that will help them make decisions that will benefit our community.



Boycott Texas

The time has come for us Texans to promote an economic boycott of our state until the misnamed "anti-sanctuary" law, Senate Bill 4 is repealed and state officials end their war on immigrants.

JAMES C. HARRINGTON



My Turn

We should begin a campaign to ask conventions, conferences and major sports events to take their business elsewhere. SB 4, Texas' "show me your papers" law, which goes into effect Sept. 1, is the worst discrimination law that any state has passed in recent times. It opens the door wide to racial profiling and will drive immigrant victims of crime, spousal abuse and human trafficking underground, doubly victimizing them. It will break up families, deporting parents of U.S.-born kids — no matter how long people have lived here and no matter how hard they have worked to better Texas as decent law-abiding people.

SB 4 prohibits local authorities from adopting policies that prevent police officers from asking people about their immigration status. The law strips local authorities of their right to decide when it is appropriate to report undocumented immigrants to federal authorities.

Individual officers, on their own, can question a detained person's immigration status, even at a routine minor traffic offense (like an expired inspection sticker). As Houston Sen. Sylvia Garcia put it, a broken taillight can lead to a broken family.

All the officer need do is "suspect" a person is undocumented; and, given the breadth of Texas' immigrant community, the officer's "suspicion" becomes a pretext for profiling and detaining virtually anyone.

Sheriffs, police chiefs and other local authorities face a Class A misdemeanor, with a fine and possible jail time, if they don't honor a request by Immigration and Customs Enforcement to hold a detainee, who might be subject to deportation, no matter how minor the offense. They face civil penalties of \$1,000 for the first infraction and up to \$25,500 for subsequent violations.

The law also applies to college campus police. Students attending a party could be at risk because minor offenses like possession of alcohol might trigger a path to deportation.

And, if SB 4 were not reason enough to boycott Texas, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has jumped on the anti-immigrant bandwagon and petitioned the Trump Administration to end the 2012 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program by Sept. 5 or he will sue to do so.

DACA protects young undocumented residents, who were brought to the country as children before 2012, from deportation and allows them a renewable, two-year work permit. Paxton would deport them, even though they really have no homeland other than this country. He would expel them from college and take away their ability to support their families.

The hard-right, gerrymandered Texas Legislature passed SB 4 over the widespread objections from local law enforcement

agencies and the business community. Police believe SB 4 will discourage immigrant victims of crime or witnesses from contacting them, thus making the community less safe.

Texas' largest cities and counties, and smaller ones, are in federal court, challenging the law. The litigation will span a few years. In the meantime, we should encourage associations, academics and businesses to hold their conventions elsewhere until the legislature rescinds SB 4; it will do so only when the financial juggernaut compels repeal.

The American Immigration Lawyers Association has set the example. The 15,000-member organization of lawyers and law professors canceled its 3-day convention in Grapevine next year. The event will relocate outside Texas because of the "dangerous, destructive and counterproductive" law. About 3,000 people attend the convention.

Arizona's passed a "show-me-your-papers" law, but legal challenges have blunted it. Even the Arizona law didn't require local authorities to honor ICE detainer requests, as SB 4 does. Arizona backed down in the face of an economic boycott. We should make Texas do the same.

Until state officials jettison SB 4, halt their war on immigrants and pay heed to the voices of law enforcement, business associations and the Hispanic community, we have no choice but to ask conventions, conferences and major sports events to take their business elsewhere.

James C. Harrington is founder and director emeritus of the Texas Civil Rights Project based in Austin.

YOUR VOICES

Trump support mind-boggling

Editor:

Donald Trump, the most un-presidential president ever, called Hillary Clinton a crook. So, who's being investigated for being a crook, or even worse, a traitor? He is.

Trump, as did Nixon, Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini, calls the media the enemy. When the media report what he says or does, he calls it "fake news." Amazing, not even he believes what he says or does.

Regardless, the narcissistic nightmare still has his supporters and this, for some, is mysteriously mind-boggling!

Mike Flynn, Trump's ex-national security adviser, is in danger of being locked up. He asked for immunity, didn't get it

JOIN THE DEBATE

The Brownsville Herald welcomes letters. Letters must be signed and give the writer's address and daytime telephone number for verification. Letters of 200 words or fewer will be given preference. Letters may be edited for length, grammar and clarity. Letters may be mailed to The Herald at 1135 E. Van Buren St., Brownsville TX 78520. Fax us at 956-542-0840. Email us at tbhletters@brownsvilleherald.com.

and now he's pleading the 5th. When it was about Hillary, he was the one who howled, "When you are given immunity, that means you've probably committed a crime. Lock her up!"

Republicans abhor big government, but they often conveniently use it to fend off their egotistic machismo, which

brings to mind that this is not a solo Trump thing; it's a Republican thing!

For example, here close to home, Brownsville was receiving nearly \$71,000 a month from shoppers who forked over a dollar for plastic bags. The accumulated fees paid for sanitation trucks, street sweepers and beautification projects. Some locals thought this was a great idea. Unfortunately, our Texas attorney general, who is under indictment for securities fraud, didn't think so.

Tear down the money-making jewel, Ken Paxton bellowed. And from our local and usually vocal anti-government conservatives, nothing. Not even a peep.

Crazy getting crazier every day.

Italo J. Zarate
Brownsville