



RONALD W. BRIDGES
DISTRICT 20
CORPUS CHRISTI

The Senate of
The State of Texas
Austin

Dear Friend:

The Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System, has recommended that a senior level state-supported college be established in Corpus Christi. I am sponsoring Senate Bill 175 in the Senate, and Representatives Hale, Salem, Truan, and Farenthold are sponsoring House Bill 337 in the House, to carry out this recommendation.

Both bills are in trouble. Although it is clear to me that virtually all citizens of Corpus Christi and the Coastal Bend strongly feel the need for this college, they have not made their views known. By contrast, an organized group who oppose the college because they view it as a threat to Texas A&I in Kingsville, have mounted a concerted letter-writing campaign against it. This campaign is having its effect on some members of the Legislature, many of whom feel there are many more people opposed to the college than in favor of it.

Those who oppose the college are sincere in their beliefs; however, I feel they are motivated by misguided institutional loyalty. They feel that A&I can continue to serve Nueces County adequately. But it is not even now serving adequately: only 21.5 percent of the Nueces County college-age population attends college, as opposed to 37 percent of the same age group in Kleberg County, where Texas A&I is located. The state average is 27 percent. This discrepancy arises because a large percentage of Nueces County residents who must work almost full-time in order to be able to attend college at all, simply cannot bear the expense of commuting back and forth to Kingsville every day, and the two or more hours it takes out of their work day. As the Corpus Christi area grows in population, and as small population centers crowd the highway between Corpus Christi and Kingsville, the situation will worsen, for there will be even more people from Nueces County who need to attend a nearby college, and it will take even longer to commute to Kingsville.

A look at the sheer numbers of the coming generation of college-eligible students makes it unmistakably clear that new colleges will have to be built. The Coordinating Board has very wisely recommended that they be built where they are needed---where the people are.

Attached is a list of members of the Legislature. I hope you will decide that Nueces County youngsters should no longer be deprived of the opportunity for an education, and that you will make your views known to some or all of the Members of the Legislature. Although I would appreciate receiving copies of your letters, please do not write to me or to any Representative from Corpus Christi. We all support the college.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronald W. Bridges".

Ronald W. Bridges
State Senator