



# TEXAS COUNSELING ASSOCIATION

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## Senator Lucio Honored as Champion for Access to Counseling Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Robin Rumancik - 512.433.9469

Yesterday afternoon (6/20), the Board of Directors of the Texas Counseling Association unanimously voted to bestow on Senator Lucio its highest honor - the TCA Presidential Award. For decades, Senator Lucio has been a tenacious advocate for increasing access to counseling programs for all Texans. Because of his tireless efforts during the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Session, the role of professional counselors is more clearly defined and the availability of their services will increase.

Some examples of his sponsored legislation this session include:

- SB 715 – amends the Education Code to provide consistent reference to “school counselor.” SB 715 was amended by the House to add the language of SB 925 and has been signed by the Governor.
- SB 925 – adds Licensed Professional Counselors to Section 21.003(b) of the Education Code, along with other professionals that school districts may hire to enhance student support services.
- SB 913 – changes from two to three the number of times candidates to become Licensed Professional Counselors may take the licensing exam before having to take additional coursework or sit-out for two years. SB 913 has also been signed by the Governor.

“Senator Lucio did not seek to be recognized by TCA,” said Alma Leal, TCA Past President. “His support of professional counselors comes from his heart. He is moved by the challenges facing his constituents and by his belief that access to professional counselors is the key to addressing their concerns,” she continued.

As a senior member of the Texas Senate, Senator Lucio consistently uses his position to influence and educate his colleagues and others on the essential roles of school counselors in promoting educational success, and of professional counselors in supporting the mental health of their communities.

“I am deeply humbled to be recognized by Texas' professional counselors.” said Senator Lucio. “I have seen first-hand the essential roles these dedicated professionals play in ensuring students' success and helping individuals overcome mental health challenges to become contributing members of our communities. I will continue to advocate for professional counselors so that they can continue to support the educational success and emotional well-being of all Texans.”

Senator Lucio will receive the Presidential Award at the TCA 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Professional Growth Conference in San Antonio on November 21, 2013. An exclusive honor, the Presidential Award is reserved for individuals who have provided outstanding service and leadership to the counseling profession. An individual may only receive this unique honor once in their lifetime.

For additional information contact TCA Public Relations Coordinator, Robin Rumancik, [robin@txca.org](mailto:robin@txca.org) or 512.433.9469.