

Saenz: Crawling targets; state budget cuts aimed at children

McALLEN, March 6 – Luisa Saenz is a well known advocate for children in the Rio Grande Valley.

Concerned about the proposed state budget cuts to Children’s Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program, as well as public education, Saenz has penned a short op-ed on the issue. However, in a novel twist, she has written it through the eyes of a Texas child.

She has titled her piece, 'Crawling Targets; State Budget Cuts Aimed at Children.'

Here it is:

What? You’re cutting my chances of growing up to be a healthy, educated, productive Texan to balance a budget that you managed to mess up before I was born?

No kidding? You’re good with denying me the health care, early childhood development and education I need now? Before I can even walk, speak for myself, vote or lobby?

Really? Can’t you take just a few dollars from the “Rainy Day Fund” and politely ask for an investment of one percent of net profits from every Texas billionaires for the new, “Sure, I Want to Help Texas Kids Now so They Can Grow Up Healthy and Educated Enough to Work for Me Later Fund”?

No Kidding! If you don’t use “Rainy Day” money now you can expect a “daily deluge” of increased costs when they take me to the hospital for ear infections and asthma and other care I would normally get from my pediatrician at a 1,000 percent less tax burden.

Really! If you hold on to “Rainy Day” money now at the rate of \$7,500 per year for say, a sixth grader, you will need to come up with \$17,000 per year if that student ends up in prison instead of in college.

Seriously! Think back to when all you could do was think, and remember how your parents had the means or opportunity to get everything you needed so you could be where you are now.

Very seriously! Look ahead just a few years and imagine a Texas Legislature filled with children of my generation with sights set on “balancing the budget” at the expense of your grandchildren. After all, even though they’re small, they will make the easiest and best targets, don’t you think?