

# Hispanic Baptist pastors rally for adult education

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AUSTIN—About two dozen Hispanic Texas Baptist leaders assembled in Austin to help legislators become better acquainted with the challenges Hispanics face as they try to achieve their educational goals, learn what could be done to help Hispanic students go further in school and discuss how currently proposed legislation would affect those efforts.

The April 21 advocacy day at the Texas Capitol was the first action of the Baptist General Convention of Texas Hispanic Education Initiative, which seeks to promote education among Hispanic students.

Gus Reyes, who leads the effort, called the day a significant and historic step for Texas Baptists.

Hispanic Texas Baptist leaders at the Texas capitol. “I believe that the voices of these Texas Baptists regarding their concern for education was heard by our legislators,” he said.

The Baptist group represented a cross-section of Hispanic Baptist leaders across the state, and included representatives from Baptist University of the Americas, Hispanic Baptist Convention of Texas, Woman’s Missionary Union of Texas, Texas Baptist Men, Buckner International, the BGCT Executive Board staff and churches statewide.

“While the effort focused on the needs of Hispanic students, I am pleased to say that progress made on the bills supported will help African-American, Hispanic and all students needing academic opportunities,” Reyes said.

Nestor Menjivar, chairman of the Hispanic Education Council and pastor of Iglesia Bautista Principe de Paz in Austin, said legislators were excited to see the group of Hispanic Baptist leaders.

“It was a great day. It was a long time coming,” he said.

“It’s a great first step in helping our Hispanic pastors and Hispanic leaders in advocating for our people.”

CLC Director Suzii Paynter said Texas Baptist leaders have a critical voice in government because they see the needs of people around them. They understand what aid people are seeking and effective ways assistance can be provided. Baptists provide legislators with personal stories of how people are affected by laws.

“Several bills critical to adult literacy and career and technology education are moving through the legislative process and are on the edge of not making it through in time before the legislative adjourns,” she said.

“The group was successful in moving these bills forward and the work they did at the capitol will most definitely bear much fruit.”