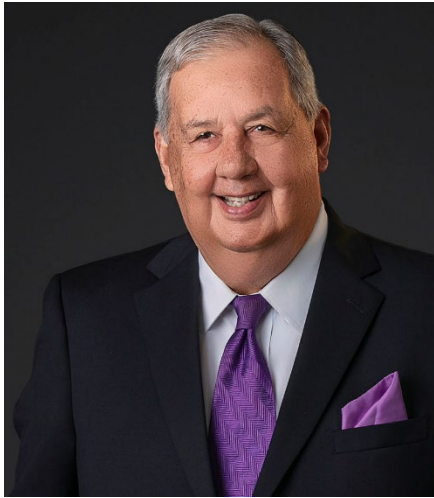


Biography of the Honorable Richard F. Cortez, Hidalgo County Judge



Richard F. Cortez, currently serving his second term as Hidalgo County Judge, brings a wealth of experience and dedication to his role as the chief elected officer of the 8th most populous county in Texas. Elected first in 2018 and re-elected in 2022, Judge Cortez has demonstrated steadfast leadership in steering the county through challenging times and driving innovative solutions to address pressing issues.

In addition to his duties as County Judge, Richard Cortez serves as the director of Emergency Management, where he plays a pivotal role in managing the county's response to significant crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, Hurricane Hanna, and the statewide deep freeze in 2021. His innovative approach to emergency preparedness, such as the Cooking School for Emergencies program, earned recognition with the Texas Association of Counties Best Practices Award in 2022.

A passionate advocate for veterans and mental wellness, Judge Cortez has spearheaded initiatives to support these communities. He has collaborated with government and non-profit organizations to establish the Hidalgo County Mental Health Coalition, aiming to raise awareness, reduce stigma, and improve access to mental health services. In 2023, Judge Cortez invested ARPA funds to provide trauma therapy training to approximately one hundred mental health professionals in Hidalgo County to help his community recover from the effects of COVID-19. Furthermore, he has prioritized addressing poverty through the creation of the Prosperity Task Force, bringing together business leaders and policymakers to develop strategies for economic development and social upliftment.

Prior to his tenure as County Judge, Richard Cortez served as Mayor and City Commissioner for the City of McAllen, demonstrating his commitment to public service and community leadership. Born and raised in Weslaco, Texas, Judge Cortez earned his Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Pan American College in 1970. With over four decades of experience as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) specializing in public and forensic accounting, he has exemplified excellence and integrity in his professional endeavors.

Richard Cortez's personal life reflects his dedication to family, having been married to the late (†) Elva (Longoria) Cortez for 47 years. Together, they have raised four children, leaving a legacy of love, compassion, and service.

As Hidalgo County Judge, Richard F. Cortez continues to lead with vision, compassion, and unwavering commitment to the well-being and prosperity of the residents of Hidalgo County.