



State Representative Philip Cortez, Ph.D. is a Southside San Antonio native who was first elected in 2012 to serve his lifelong community at the State Capitol. He earned his Associate's degree from Palo Alto Community College in 2000 and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Texas at San Antonio in 2002.

Representative Cortez later earned a Master of Public Administration from the University of Texas at San Antonio in 2007. He earned his Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the University of Texas at Austin in December 2017.



Before becoming a member of the Texas House of Representatives, Representative Cortez was elected to the San Antonio City Council in 2007 and re-elected in 2009. As the councilman for District 4, he focused on enhancing the district's neighborhoods and implementing citywide improvement projects. He worked to strengthen the police and fire departments, clean up local parks, and modernize libraries throughout the area. One of his most significant accomplishments during his tenure was the establishment of the Willie Cortez Senior Center, located in the heart of his district. Named in honor of his late grandfather, the center addresses a crucial need in the community by providing aging adults with access to important resources and a space for social interaction. Mayor Julian Castro appointed Representative Cortez as Chairman of the Audit, Infrastructure, and Growth Committees, as well as President of the San Antonio Housing Trust Public Facility Corporation and the Governance Committee.

In 2019, Representative Cortez retired from the U.S. Air Force as a Captain after proudly serving for 20 years. He served for seven years as an enlisted airman with the 433rd Airlift Wing at Lackland Air Force Base, eventually

rising to Staff Sergeant. In 2006, he was commissioned as Second Lieutenant. He was deployed to the Middle East in April 2016 for six months to support Operation Inherent Resolve. During his deployment, he was awarded a Commendation Medal (First Oak Leaf Cluster) for Outstanding Achievement.



During his time as the HD 117 Representative, Representative Cortez has demonstrated his effectiveness as a legislator by successfully passing over 40 pieces of legislation into law. His policies have included support for veterans and their families, improvements to public schools, protections for senior citizens, and job creation in Bexar County. He has consistently advocated for property rights by pursuing annexation reform to benefit the residents of West Bexar County. A firm believer in the idea that education is the great equalizer, he takes pride in his efforts to strengthen the knowledge base in his district and to close the digital divide that can hinder learning.

At the beginning of the 89th Legislative Session, Representative Cortez was appointed Chairman of the Permanent Standing Subcommittee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs. This role enables him to influence policies that affect veterans, drawing on his own experiences from military service. As a legislator for Military City, USA, this leadership position is particularly significant, allowing him to have a direct impact on the community of active-duty military personnel, their families, and veterans. Prior to this unique appointment, he served as Chairman of the Urban Affairs Committee and as Vice Chairman of the Elections Committee within the Texas House of Representatives.

Representative Cortez is married to Debbie Cruz-Cortez, J.D., who obtained her law degree from the SMU Dedman School of Law. She currently practices immigration and criminal defense law in San Antonio, Texas. The couple welcomed their first child, Camila Sofia Cortez, on May 18, 2024. They are proud to serve the residents of House District 117.

