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**EL PASO COUNTY ATTORNEY JO ANNE BERNAL RECEIVES THE
WOMEN OF DISTINCTION AWARD FROM THE TEXAS ASSOCIATION
OF MEXICAN AMERICAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE**

The award was presented this afternoon in Austin, TX.

The Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce (TAMACC) today presented El Paso County Attorney Jo Anne Bernal with the Women of Distinction Award at a ceremony held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Austin, Texas.

Ms. Bernal was among 12 Texas women who received the award for their leadership and for having a positive impact in their communities. According to TAMACC, Ms. Bernal was honored not only for becoming the first woman elected County Attorney in El Paso County, but also for her leadership in defending the rights of immigrants during this past year.

In February County Attorney Bernal denounced the arrest of a transgender woman victim of domestic violence by ICE agents inside the El Paso County Courthouse. The incident happened few minutes after the undocumented immigrant had obtained a protective order against her abuser. The arrest produced a national media storm due to its perceived implications for victims of domestic violence who in the past have felt protected from abuser's threats of deportation if they denounced the abuse to police. Bernal worked with the El Paso County Judge Veronica Escobar, Congressman Beto O'Rourke and the federal authorities to investigate the incident and prevent, as much as possible, a chilling effect among the immigrant community victims of crimes.

During this year's legislative session, El Paso County Attorney Jo Anne Bernal testified in Austin against Senate Bill 4, also known as the anti-sanctuary cities law. Bernal warned legislators that several of the provisions included in the bill not only could potentially produce a spike in the crime rate in communities with high concentration of undocumented immigrants, but that she believed some of those provision were unconstitutional. After the Texas Legislature approved SB4 and Governor Abbot signed the bill into law, Bernal joined dozens of cities and organizations in

suing the State of Texas to block the implementation of the bill. The legal fight over the legality continues until today before the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans.

Jo Anne Bernal has served as County Attorney in El Paso County since 2009. She is married and has two daughters.

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