



# THE FLYNN REPORT

*January 12, 2007*

**Greetings Friends, Constitutes and Supporters:**

**The first day of any new session is exciting and this week was no different than most as the swearing in of the 80th Legislature was held on Tuesday the 9<sup>th</sup> of January. Returning and new members of the Legislature gathered on the House floor to meet many for the first time and get to know each other and to take the oath of office.**

**I was honored to have my wife, Susan and our granddaughter and grandson hold my sons family Bible for me to be sworn-in for a third term in the Texas House of Representatives. Afterwards we were pleased to have been able to have an "Open House" at our new office in the Texas Capitol and delighted that so many of my family, friends and constitutes were able to join us for the Opening Day ceremonies. It was a great success and I feel everyone enjoyed the special day. Twenty six new members were sworn-in for the first time. Interestingly with the new members we now have 44 lawyers and one law student serving in the Texas House of Representatives.**

**On the opening day of the session after the swearing in ceremony, Secretary of State Roger Williams presided over the House. Discussion centered on who would be the next Speaker. The election came down to current Speaker Tom Craddick (R-Midland) and two other members one from Plano and one from Waxahachie. The two candidates had the support of the minority party and after discovering they did not have the votes they joined each other against Speaker Craddick. The debate centered on how the next Speaker was to be elected. Supporters of Craddick publicly supported an open and recorded vote, while the opposition wanted a confidential election.**

**A rare floor challenge was averted when they withdrew as candidates following a procedural vote on when members' votes would be disclosed. Texas voters won a big victory as the debate over whether or not the vote for Speaker should remain transparent and a record vote. This proved to be a solid win for conservatives with the vote being 80 to 68 to table the proposal. Fifteen democrats joining the republicans' and fourteen republicans crossed the line to vote with the democrats to hold a secret ballot.**

**After winning this vote it cleared the way for Speaker Craddick to be re-elected as Speaker for the 80th Legislature. My congratulations to him on his overwhelming re-election bid for a third term as Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives. He has led the Texas House with a steadfast commitment to conservative values.**

**In his accepting speech, Speaker Craddick said (State Representative) was the only elected position for which he had ever run, because it is the body for which he had the utmost respect and zeal. He assured the Members that he believed one of his primary responsibilities as the elected leader was to assist them to fulfill their elected purpose. He went on to say he wanted to be responsive to the Members' personal needs, and wanted all to go forth and do the work for which they were elected. He said we should do it with passion, and do it with decorum. Speaker Craddick concluded by saying we belong to the greatest legislative institution in all the 50 states. Our diversity, intellect and passion are unmatched by any other and he was committed to maintain that distinction.**

**The rest of the week was devoted to determining the internal workings of the House of Representatives. The House began debating the rules to be adopted for this session. The legislation outlines all the rules that govern the House, including the duties and rights of the Speaker, employees, standing committees, the organization, powers and duties of committees, floor procedures, order of business, calendars, motions, bills, joint resolutions, House resolutions, concurrent resolutions, and amendments.**

**After nearly 9-hours of lengthy and often contentious debate, the rules were adopted. Effort was made by the minority party to weaken the Speaker's powers the draft proposals had already inserted many new rules and had already moved toward more record votes, requiring an automatic record vote on final passage of bills. Freshmen members learned first hand they must be creditable and honorable in all their actions on the House Floor and anything to the contrary will always be remembered.**

**In other action during the week Gov. Rick Perry designated spending caps as an emergency matter. This will allow the legislature to move quickly towards assuring the property tax relief for local homeowners approved in the previous session. Gov. Perry indicated in his memo that he would like to see legislation that will provide that the appropriations made for the purpose of directly reducing local property taxes and state appropriations made for the purpose of returning state funds to the public do not count against the constitutional state spending limit. He also wants the legislature to have the authority to provide for the grant of public money the purpose of returning surplus state funds to the taxpayer.**

**The Legislative Budget Board set the spending cap and acknowledged that the tax shift caused by last year's property tax relief bill would cause the state to bump against the spending cap. The Legislature will consider a statute or a constitutional amendment to allow tax relief to not be counted against the cap.**

**Newly elected State Comptroller Susan Combs certified \$14.3 billion in "new money" for the upcoming biennium. In doing this she pointed to the sluggish housing market and falling oil and gas prices as indicators that the Texas economy may grow slower than in recent years. The state's sales tax revenue the single largest revenue source is expected to be 4.2 percent next biennium. That is lower than the current fiscal year's projected 7 percent growth and much lower than the 12 percent growth in sales tax revenue from last fiscal year. With the Texas Comptroller's Office certifying a budget surplus many groups are calling for a return to tax payers the surplus. Much of the surplus is already committed to buy down school district property taxes as promised. It has been felt all along there would be a surplus and most were just waiting to get accurate numbers from the newly elected comptroller. Most have been very cautious to make sure we did not overstate, since this was the desire to use this surplus to take care of the school finance reforms that will provide the much needed property tax relief.**

**Much of this coming week will be devoted to the inauguration of Gov. Perry and Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst which will take place on Tuesday, January 16<sup>th</sup>. The Members will be anxiously waiting for their committee assignments. After this week the legislature will be about the business of governing our great state and I anticipate it will a productive session.**

**We continue to welcome your input and your questions. Contact our office located in the Capitol extension: E1.302. Mailing address: P. O. Box 2910, Austin, TX 78768. Email [District2.Flynn@house.state.tx.us](mailto:District2.Flynn@house.state.tx.us). Toll free number 1-800-734-9515.**

**May God bless you and our great state of Texas,**

**Dan Flynn  
State Representative, District – 2**

**If your name is on this email list in error, please respond and say UNSUBSCRIBE**