



The Flynn Report

January 16, 2009

Greetings Friends, Constituents and Supporters:

The Texas Legislature began its 81st Session as required by the constitution on Tuesday, January 13, of this week. The law requires the Legislature to convene on the second Tuesday of January every odd year for 140 days to set the bi-annual budget and to consider the people's business.

As is customary, Secretary Hope Andraden, Texas Secretary of State, presides over the House in organization. The first order of business being to call the roll and the seating of the 150 duly elected members. Secretary Hope emphasized members should focus on working together as one Texas and that it is essential to commit to work across the aisle for good government.

Representative Joe Straus (R), San Antonio, was elected by acclamation, and became the new Speaker with a unanimous vote. His election settled several weeks of political intrigue and provided a change of leadership in the House. The change was very smooth with Straus emerging as the unopposed Speaker and ending the three term leadership of Speaker Tom Craddick (R), Midland.

Speaker Straus made his case for bipartisanship calling for a united House, as the 81st Legislative Session was officially called to order with the State, families and friends of the members looking on. He has selected a transition team that is helping him to organize his office as he prepares for his leadership role as Speaker of the Texas House. He tapped former State Senator and Bexar County Judge Cyndi Krier, and former Representative Clyde Alexander — a Republican and a Democrat to head his team. He also selected Lisa Kaufman, Executive Director and general counsel at the Texas Civil Justice League and a former staffer in the Texas Senate and the U.S. Congress. Finally, Denise Davis, former

House parliamentarian, an attorney with Baker Botts, completes a team that promises to be successful.

Just prior to the opening day of the session Texas Comptroller Susan Combs provided her latest biennial revenue estimate and underscored the reality that the national economic downturn is hitting Texas. She predicated there would be a 10.5 percent decrease in available funds. This, of course, means that my colleagues and I in the Texas Legislature must remain vigilant in protecting Texans against tax increases to fill the budget hole.

With the nation facing the struggling economy taxpayers must not be asked to make up this revenue shortfall to the State in the form of new or higher taxes. We must continue in the policies that have been successful and the State must tighten its belt and reconsider its spending priorities just as all families across this state must make difficult financial decisions every day.

We have met this challenge before, and we will meet it again. In 2003, Legislature acted responsibly in the face of a multi-billion dollar revenue shortfall by balancing the budget without raising taxes. This action proved to be successful and is why Texas is in the favorable position we have been in. I will continue to fight to ensure that the State will not squeeze taxpayers in this difficult economy as we move forward in this 81st Legislative Session.

Comptroller Combs admitted the funding forecast is "decidedly cautious," she went on to say the national economy is an "important factor" in her revenue forecast. She cited declining sales tax receipts, what could be "the worst national recession in decades," a declining stock market and volatile oil and gas market as contributors to the economic climate in Texas.

Although consumer confidence is down across the nation, Combs said it is still "innately more optimistic" in Texas than it is in the rest of country. She predicted Texas will see more effects from the downturn of the national economy in FY 2009 and then begin to regain economic momentum in FY 2010.

"The economic and revenue outlook for Texas during the next two years is challenging, but we have positive factors that put us in an enviable position to ride out the national downturn and emerge strong, healthy and competitive," Combs said.

It is my pledge and desire that the 81st legislative session under the new leadership will continue to improve Texas and maintain our position as the leader of the nation by promoting sound social and economic policy. I

will continue to be guided by the wishes and desires of the residents of House District 2 and the State holding to the conservative principles I believe will best benefit all the citizens of Texas and their families.

It remains my pleasure and honor to represent all the people of House District 2. My staff and I continue to welcome your input and your questions. Contact our office located in the Capitol GW.4; Mailing address: Post Office Box 2910, Austin, TX 78768.

Email 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