



The Flynn Report – February 6, 2009

Greetings Friends, Constituents and Supporters:

The thoughts in the minds of most members are what the committee assignments will be. It is anticipated that those assignments will be passed out toward the end of the coming week. I have continued to work on Sunset Commission items and looking forward to finding out where Speaker Joe Straus believes I can best serve in the 81st Session of the Texas Legislature.

As we await these assignments we have been happy to host Hunt County Days on January 28th and 29th and Van Zandt County Days February 3rd and 4th. We were most pleased with the number of folks that attended these events and we were honored with the number of colleagues that took the time to stop by our receptions in the Capitol.

During these opening days of this session I was able to attend the executive committee of the National Association of State Legislatures (NCSL) on which I serve and where we passed our budget for the coming year. It was very affirming to observe that Texas is one of only six states not facing a deficit in the coming year. This is due to the hard decisions that were made in the last three sessions to make the necessary cuts to maintain our balanced budget while continuing to maintain our essential services.

In the past weeks the *Legislative Budget Board* posted their 2010-11 budget that shows the State starting the two-year cycle about \$2.5 billion in the red. This would be to fund spending at the present levels. This means the State will need \$82.5 billion in general revenues compared to the Comptroller's revenue estimate outlined at just over \$77 billion. Of course the Rainy Day Fund wisely set aside by the state leadership and approved by the previous legislature will help ease this difference. However, it should not be used to expand services and used only to cover those special needs created by Hurricanes Ike and Dolly, etc. State agencies will need to review their budgets and work to trim them back just as all our citizens will need to do as we work towards coming out of the global financial

challenges that loom over head.

Current recommendations include an increase in spending on health and human services, a decrease in General Revenue spending with an increase in spending on higher education and a major decrease in spending on business and economic development. These are only proposals and numbers and percentages will change as the session moves forward. A positive and somewhat comforting thought is to note that many “experts” remain confident that oil prices will return to the \$60-per-barrel range within the next six to nine months and this of course would be most helpful to the Texas economy.

It was discouraging to see conservatives on the State Board of Education (SBOE) lose a very narrow 7-8 vote on the evolution issue stripping “strengths and weaknesses” from the TEKS. It concerns me as I see this as a free speech issue and major change to our education programs. Final vote of this issue will probably come at their next meeting and I encourage you to be in contact with SBOE members expressing your thoughts and concerns.

Highlights in Governor Rick Perry’s “State of the State” address were many items I will heartily support. He pushed the concerns of most taxpayers that Texans simply cannot afford nor stand for bigger government. Many may want to use the Rainy Day Fund as a way to grow programs and obligate taxpayers to new or expanded activities. Perry says his budget recommendations would point to using those monies for one-time expenditures only.

Perry also believes it is time to add another layer of protection for Texas' unborn and would support efforts to require those wanting to terminate a pregnancy to review their ultrasound before proceeding.

He said there should be no more “sanctuary cities” and agrees that we need a requirement for photo identification to vote or the same identification procedure for voting that we require for voter registration.

It appears that energy infrastructure will be very important and a big issue this session as the Governor was very firm on moving Texas on to energy independence. He noted there were six new nuclear reactors on the drawing board and indicated strong support for wind, solar and all alternative energy sources.

I was happy to hear that he will support raising the small business exemption to \$1 million on the Franchise Tax.

In support of the Enterprise Fund he noted that Texas is home to 1 out of 10 Americans, but 7 out of 10 new jobs last year were created in Texas. He went on to say that since 2003; \$377 million of investments in the Fund have created nearly 54 000 jobs while drawing \$14 billion in direct capital investment to Texas and predicated that even in these tough times, more jobs are moving our way.

I believe that all Texans and Legislators must keep in mind that the national economic situation will get worse before it gets better. I agree with many that it would be most imprudent to obligate taxpayers to higher taxes this Session by increasing spending and wished that the Federal Government would follow the example that the best stimulus package is one of low taxes and limited government.

It was, indeed, my honor and privilege to participate in the Investiture events on February 6, 2009, of Dr. Dan R. Jones as the 11th President of Texas A&M Commerce and the joyous event of the ground breaking of their new music building on the campus. We applaud the Texas A&M Board of Regents for their wise and thoughtful selection and look forward to a long and fruitful working relationship.

I would like to close with this quote from - -- *Benjamin Franklin*

"When the people find that they can vote themselves money that will herald the end of the republic. Sell not liberty, to purchase power."

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: P. O. 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