



From the Desk of  
Representative  
**Dan Flynn**



## *The Flynn Report*

*February 11, 2005*

Greetings constituents, supporters and friends:

It is difficult to believe that a month has already passed for this 79<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session. As we start the 5th week of the session things are beginning to move forward. Members are filing bills, committee meetings are beginning, and groups are busily building support for or opposition to legislative ideas. Many groups are visiting the Capitol, and there is a sense of optimism all around.

The Legislative Budget Board released its base budget bill for the 2006-2007 biennium. The starting-point budget outlines \$134.4 billion in state spending, with \$63.5 billion in general revenue spending. The 2004-2005 budget spent \$117.4 billion in all funds and \$58.2 billion in general revenue.

The base bill proposes spending \$1.2 billion less than the \$64.7 billion in general revenue that the Comptroller declared available. This will give the Legislature greater flexibility to address priorities and a potential supplemental appropriations bill. The base budget calls for reduced spending in over 100 state agency budgets. It would increase overall funding for public and higher education by \$3.2 billion and provide funds for the anticipated annual enrollment growth in public schools.

Many believe we were using bad numbers in the last session and that there is a need for increases for Medicaid and other health and human services funding by \$2.4 billion to restore dental and vision benefits to CHIP enrollees. It takes into consideration enrollment growth for Medicaid and CHIP and would provide protection for existing funding for Adult Protective Services Program, women, infant, and children food programs, childhood immunizations, mental health, hospitals, mental retardation schools, community mental health and mental retardation services.

**There would be increases in transportation funding by \$2.8 billion thanks to new transportation financing tools, such as bonding, approved last session. It would also restore funding to current levels for the Veteran's Commission and the Texas National Guard supporting our Texas veterans and troops who have been called to active duty.**

**Also, more money is being called to go into Jr. colleges. With the large number of new students going into higher education the needs continue to grow.**

**Continuing to fund the Enterprise Fund has much support since it has proven to be the closing in getting business into Texas having brought more than 100,000 new jobs.**

**Most everyone agrees that the Workmen's Compensation program is broken and a strong effort is underway to fix this problem.**

**In other news this week State Representative Talmadge Heflin withdrew his election contest he previously filed in the State House District 149 race. Representative Heflin indicated he would continue to fight for meaningful election reform. I plan to continue the battle to fight to end voter fraud and corruption once and for all in every part of Texas. Heflin and House candidate Eric Opiela, who withdrew his election contest last month, continue to believe there is indisputable evidence of illegal voting and election fraud and corruption that they uncovered in their post-election investigations. We must bring a new day of fair and honest elections to every part of this State**

**I want to personally thank Representative Heflin for his statesmanship and service to the State of Texas. Not only was he a major part of balancing the 2004 – 2005 budget that projected a \$10 billion shortfall without raising taxes on hard working Texans, but his tireless efforts in serving the people of Texas over the years of his service will not be forgotten.**

**Last week the school reform bill, HB2, was filed and also the revenue bill HB3 was filed. HB3 is definitely what we call a shell bill, which means it will change greatly as the ideas on how to fund the schools begin to come together. We will also have a better idea of how much money will be required to fund the schools based on ideas in HB2 and HB3.**

**On February 8<sup>th</sup> the House Committee on Public Education began meeting regularly to discuss HB2 and what Chairman Kent Grusendorf refers to as a “Roadmap to Results”.**

**Grusendorf has made it clear that it is important for the committee to consider input from all House members. He has ask members that if they have an amendment or proposal they believe needs to be considered to please send it to his office so all of the members of the Public Education committee will be able to discuss and consider any idea.**

**In what is considered an effort to include all members Chairman Kent Grusendorf (R-Arlington) has named Rep. Scott Hochberg (D-Houston) to head a subcommittee to address formula issues on House Bill 2. Hochberg is regarded by many as one of the best-versed members in the Legislature on the current school finance formula. This is seen as a bi-particism effort and hopefully will provide more acceptances from the education community.**

**Speaker Tom Craddick has stated the Public Education bill should be ready late February or early March and will include a rewrite of the tax code. Some kind of broad base tax will be established that will enable the legislature to eliminate the Franchise Tax. Only 1 in 6 business is paying a franchise tax but the real figures might mean only 1 in 10 are actually paying what has become a “volunteer tax”. The plans will be to lower property tax somewhere between \$0.25 to \$0.75 cents. A statewide property tax appears likely with some kind of a cap probably around 5%.**

**Expansion of gambling continues to raise its head with more members believing this could be a strong source of revenue for the state. It is very important to express your views on this subject, as it will be a major issue before this session is over.**

**My staff and I are looking forward to Wednesday, March 2nd designated as Rains County Day in the Texas Legislature. This will be a great opportunity to see government in action and to visit. All interested persons are invited to attend. Be sure to call or email Barbara at the Rains County Chamber of Commerce office, to advise if you will be attending. Her number is 903-473-3913 and email [euby@direcway.com](mailto:euby@direcway.com),**

**We continue to welcome your input and your questions. Contact our office located in the Capitol extension: E1.324. Mailing address: P. O. Box 2910, Austin, TX 78768. Phone 512-463-0880 or [dan.flynn@house.state.tx.us](mailto:dan.flynn@house.state.tx.us).**

**If you know someone not receiving our report please forward this email to them and let them know they can sign up to receive it.**

**God bless you and God bless Texas,**

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

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