

From the office of
Texas State Representative - Dan Flynn

THE FLYNN REPORT

Legislative Newsletter

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Greetings Constituents, Supporters and Friends:

The last two weeks of the legislature was meaningful in many cases but none more than the pleasure I had of hosting the groups coming to Austin for Hunt County Days, Rains County Days and Van Zandt County Days. Over 200 came to Austin for the special days to participate in being a part of the process. We were able to enjoy special recognition from the Senate, the House and the Governors Office. Governor Perry, Lt. Governor Dewhurst and Speaker Craddick were available to meet with each of the groups and were even available for pictures. Only the Van Zandt County Group did not get to meet with Governor Perry. He was called away on state business and was not in Austin on their special day. He has assured me he will be available at a later date.

Another highlight was having four foreign exchange students from the Wills Point ISD coming to Austin to meet and visit with Governor Perry.

Thank you for all of your feedback concerning election or appointment of judges in Texas. You may be interested in knowing that of the many responses I received on this issue all were strongly in favor of maintaining the citizen's right to vote for our Judges. As I mentioned in the last *Flynn Report* I will continue to work towards that end. As I previously stated the Republican Party of Texas Platform states: "The Party supports our right to select our judges by a direct vote of the people."

The opposition to House Bill 4, lawsuit reform, showed their cards to all Texans this week when in a partisan manner pulled out all the stops to kill House Bill 4. In addition to filing over 300 amendments to this legislation and dragging out debate for two long days, they also called a 'point of order,' thus nullifying the work. As previously reported this bill will bring about wholesale change in Texas medical malpractice laws in limiting damage awards. The bill will add protections for businesses and doctors in all types of lawsuits, but the flagship of House Bill 4 would cap non-economic damage rewards in medical-malpractice suits at \$250,000. Governor Perry had called on the legislature to "take decisive action" and like many see it as providing a solution to sky rocking insurance rates and an answer that will be less hostile toward doctors.

What is so disturbing about the opposition's point of order is that it was in regards to a violation that occurred on February 26 – meaning they were fully aware of the problem for nearly a month. Why not raise the issue as soon as it is recognized? With only 140 days for the session, two days are significant – precious time that could have been spent working in committee on critical issues that remain before the legislature such as public school finance reform, and certainly balancing the budget. I regret that they would

require the House to waste two full days on the floor debating a bill they knew they would kill. It appears they know they lack numerical strength and their only hope to stop the conservative agenda that Texans have mandated is to obstruct the process using procedural rules and attempt to embarrass conservative leadership. It is exactly the same type of partisan behavior we are seeing in Washington, D.C., on the nomination of Miguel Estrada. Nevertheless, we will continue to work towards meaningful reform.

I have received emails, letters, phone calls and personal visits concerning misinformation on efforts to reform public school financing. It is disturbing to hear well-meaning comments that are being repeated from special interest groups whose interest is their own and not for teachers and all Texans. It is being said falsely that the legislature is considering taking anywhere from \$11 to 33 billion from public education and working to eliminate health care insurance from active and retired teachers. It is also being suggested that there are efforts to eliminate children's health care. I know of no one in the legislature who wants anything but what is best for our public schools, our children, our teachers and the best insurance that can be provided with the funds available. Special interest groups would have you believe teachers and the programs are the targets. Instead, legislators are scrutinizing these very groups and the bureaucratic nightmare that for years has soaked up so much of our funds giving them to programs that were never of the legislature's design. We will continue to work for what is best for our students, our teachers and all Texans.

On another front, Governor Perry reported that over 8,000 members of the Texas National Guard have been called into service since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. He went on to say that, "President Bush is right to pursue the terrorists who have harmed this nation already and those who plot to do so again." Perry said. "Texas and America stand behind our troops, wishing them safety for the mission ahead." A memorial prayer service was held by the Governor, Lt. Governor, Speaker of the House and all Senators and House members in the rotunda of the State Capitol honoring President Bush, our national leaders and the men and women involved in the war and praying for their safety and speedy return in the defeat of the evil regimes against freedom in the world.

This will be another grueling week as House Bill 4 was sent back to committee within minutes of its death, passing back out of committee to be reconsidered on the House floor early next week. Naturally, we can expect more of the same from the liberal attacks as we consider the budget and other key issues. While they do not have the votes to advance their liberal agenda, they will no doubt use every procedural tool they can muster to delay and deny Texans the conservative reforms that the people have mandated.

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