

From the office of  
Texas State Representative - Dan Flynn

## **THE FLYNN REPORT**

*Legislative Newsletter*  
*June 23, 2003*

Greetings Constituents, Supporters and Friends:

The 78th regular session of the legislature is now history and Governor Rick Perry has recently called the Texas Legislature into special session beginning June 30, 2003, for the primary purpose of addressing congressional redistricting. I want to provide additional information for you to consider since there appears to be some confusion as to why this is necessary.

First and foremost I support the governor's decision and agree that duly elected officials, not federal judges, should be responsible for drawing district lines. It is the Texas Legislature's **constitutional responsibility** to establish the Texas congressional districts based on new census information. This task was left unfinished during the 77th Legislative Session in 2001.

After the census of 2000, the **Legislature was required by law to draw new district lines** for representation. The Legislature did some of this work, but not the Congressional lines. It can be assumed that the existing leadership at that time did not want the lines to change. Therefore, the court in 2001 had to step in and re-draw the lines. **The appointed federal judicial panel** drew the current partisan interim map. It increased the number of districts, by two, to reflect increased population in Texas. The rest of the work was done to **PRESERVE** the status quo to **protect incumbents' districts**. The map issued by the court was a stopgap measure and was not intended to usurp the legislature of its responsibility in drawing a final map. It now is the responsibility of the Legislature to review the interim map and finalize the lines for this decade.

The current congressional map does not accurately reflect the will of Texas voters or demographic changes. 56% of Texans voted for a GOP congressional candidate in the 2002 elections, yet Republicans received just 47% of the seats. That's because the current lines are gerrymandered to pack lots of Republican voters into a few districts. Republicans and minorities are under-represented in the Texas Congressional Delegation.

The Special Session is required because some members were AWOL during the regular 78<sup>th</sup> session. Due to the failure of the 77<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session to pass a fair congressional redistricting plan in 2001, and the lack of a quorum prevented one from being considered

during the 2003 legislative session. The legislature needs to enact a fair redistricting plan now, before the next election, so that Texans' voices are finally heard and respected. In a recent article by Michael Quinn Sullivan of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, he sums up the Texas 78th Legislative Session very well. He said, "While not perfect, the budget priorities established during this session clearly reflect the will of Texans as expressed at the ballot box: tightly controlled spending, strict responsibility over funds, and an abandonment of the spend-and-tax mentality of the political left."

Two-thirds of Texans voted for gubernatorial and legislative candidates pledging to hold the line on taxes. As a people, we categorically rejected calls for such discredited ideas as higher rates and new taxes. The solution, to our budget shortfall was controlling the growth of government, not raising old taxes or implementing new ones.

As the session progressed and the budget battle was debated, many Texans remained rightly suspicious of legislative commitment. A Texas Poll published in the *Houston Chronicle* on March 9th found 72 percent pessimistically feared the legislature would raise taxes. This, of course, was after more than a year of the state's major newspapers asking how much and what kind of a tax increase Texans would face. For them the implementation was a foregone conclusion. No thought was given that states with higher taxes, and with income taxes, faced far worse shortfalls. The major media and their ideological friends continued to cling to the idea that the only solution was to raise taxes. **They were wrong.**

Even now after only 140 days of a conservative majority many of these same skeptics do not understand that when the people said, "Limit the growth of government," they had a leadership that sympathized. When the people said, "Make government more efficient," they had a legislature willing to act. And when the people said, "Hold the line on taxes," they were presented a budget that did just that.

With this same commitment we will present the citizens of Texas what they expect and that is to tend to our constitutional responsibility to establish the Texas congressional districts based on new census information and to not run and hide because the task is unpopular. I am ready and willing to return to Austin and complete this task, which was left unfinished during the 77th Legislative Session in 2001. **The Texas Legislature needs to draw congressional districts.** We don't need a group of unelected federal judges telling us what to do.

My staff and I welcome your input and your questions. You can reach us in our office located in the Capitol extension: **E1.324**. Mailing address: **P. O. Box 2910, Austin, TX, 78768** and our phone number is **512/463-0880**. Canton District office: **P. O. Box 999, Canton, TX, 75103** phone number **903-567-0921**. Email **dan.flynn@house.state.tx.us**.

God bless you all and God bless Texas.

Dan Flynn  
State Representative, House District 2