



From the Desk of
Representative
Dan Flynn



The Flynn Report

December 24, 2004

Greetings constituents, supporters and friends:

It is difficult to believe that 2004 has come and gone and the many changes that have come about during the year. Who would have ever believed that the very base of our foundation and principles would be under attack with political correctness? How can one celebrate Christmas, a national holiday, proclaimed by President George Washington without singing the traditional Christmas carols and celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ without a mention of His name? Our nation's motto "In God we Trust" being under attack, the sanctity of life and traditional marriage being challenged. We remember the battles and victories of those who went before us and the responsibility that we have as bearers of the torch of freedom for those who come after us. We can never forget that government is run by those that show up and **we must never be found lacking.**

The good news is the highlight of this year was the re-election of President George W. Bush reassuring the nation and the world that the majority of Americans support our President, his policies, the principles of our founding fathers and our family values with the Judeo Christian principles our nation was founded on.

We cannot take this victory for granted and each of us must take up the armor and challenge each other and our leaders to keep the faith and be steadfast to maintain these principals for the future of our children, our grandchildren and the nation.

In reviewing the highlights of the year it was difficult for me to focus on just a few for purposes of this report. We began the year with the opening of our Greenville district office in the Paul Mathew's Exchange Building across from the Hunt County Court House. This has proved to be an excellent opportunity to serve the citizens of Hunt County and we look forward to having it available for the future.

Of course, the Special Session called by Governor Rick Perry to address public school finance was a major element of this year. The House passed HB1 and sent it to the Senate on May 5th. The bill produced much-needed property tax relief, formulas that

prescribed more money per student and included visionary education reforms aimed both at educational excellence and at-risk students. I think the many critics sadly overlooked the accomplishments called for in this bill. The push was to address public school reform and to revamp the tax code however; the special session ended with the House passing a bill to move the process forward but it stalled in the Senate without support and pressure by special interest groups. The effort will continue to be to require educational excellence by maintaining funding equity, protecting the state's job creation climate and reducing and controlling property taxes. This will be a priority in the coming session.

One of the most controversial concerns of the public school finance issue was the effort to include the expansion of gambling with Video Lottery Terminals (VLTs – Slot machines). This will continue to be an issue as we move towards the coming session of the Legislature. Everyone wants to fund education and reduce property taxes and while this is one way it is not the only way to get the funding. Other ways will involve some of the more onerous ways like taxes on services, increase of sales tax, closing loopholes in the Franchise Tax, perhaps even creating a business tax. Many detest these ideas and feel a person does not have to play the terminals that will allow the rest who do not play get property tax relief and more funding for schools. My concerns have been the added cost that comes with expansion of gambling and the challenges created with the increase of the gambling element in our state. I have told leadership I will not vote to expand gambling in our state and feel there remains other options. I cannot vote to gamble on our children's future with this type of funding. It will be a tough vote for all and at this time I do not know if the votes are there to pass. I continue to believe we can fund education with broad based fair taxes that will be revenue neutral.

It was a joy to attend the Greenville Rotary Club with President Bill Rolston and President-Elect Rich Carter to honor two of our local heroes, Stephen Hatchel and Jud Dozier. They were recognized for their efforts in saving Stephen's brother, Ben, from drowning during a recent fishing trip.

I was privileged to represent Speaker Tom Craddick and Texas at a Governing Conference in Boston, Mass. We were again reminded we do things well (and even better!) in Texas.

I was able to visit with many of the mayors in their cities and listen to their concerns, challenges and opportunities. We visited Caddo Mills, Quinlan, Campbell, Celeste, Lone Oak, Greenville, Canton, Van, Point, Wolf City, Grand Saline, EDOM, West Tawakoni and many other communities. I really enjoyed spending time with the mayors in their cities and feel the meetings were most beneficial. I also met and visited with the superintendents from the many school districts throughout House District 2. I held many meetings with the county judges, commissioners and justices of the peace from all three counties discussing the needs and concerns for our future.

It was an honor touring the district with Congressman Ralph Hall and Congressman Jeb Hensarling. My wife, Susan, and I toured the district promoting Patriot Academy with Former State Representative and founder Rick Green. They are to be commended for

their efforts in sponsoring the second annual Patriot Academy at the Capital providing young people with the opportunity to learn how our system works. Republican Party of Texas Chairman Tina Benkiser and Vice Chairman David Barton honored us with many visits to the district promoting the conservative principals of our founding fathers.

A personal highlight was the success of the 2nd Annual Dan Flynn First Monday Golf Tournament with over 83 golfers and over 100 in attendance. I hope you will make your plans to participate in the 3rd annual tournament already scheduled for September 2, 2005 at the Twin Lakes Golf Course in Canton.

A major issue discussed during 2004 were the criticisms and the changes in Children's Health Care Program (CHIP) enrollment. As widely reported the CHIP rolls are down from 507,529 on September 1, 2003, to 361,464 on July 1, 2004, a difference of 146,065. The reasons for CHIP disenrollment are not always acutely reported and the major reason for these figures is:

- (1) Failure to complete the renewal process (40 percent of all disenrollments).
- (2) Enrollment in Medicaid (25 percent of all disenrollments).
- (3) Family found ineligible after submitting renewal application (18 percent of all disenrollment).

Another reason the CHIP rolls have fallen is because families fail to complete the renewal process. Many of the lowest income children are being transferred to Medicaid. Federal law requires that the poorest children be covered by Medicaid instead of CHIP. Although CHIP offers a better match of federal dollars to state expenditures, Texas has no choice but to move qualified recipients from CHIP to Medicaid if they qualify for Medicaid. I am reminded of a Ronald Reagan quote of "trust, but verify" and I would encourage everyone to "verify" reports prior to taking them as "facts". I am assured by the Health and Human Services Commission that no child goes without health care.

I stated this year with what I believed was one of the most qualified staffs of any of the State representatives offices and was disappointed to see Kelley Theriot and Rhita Koches move on to other opportunities. I feel very blessed to announce I will again have one of the most qualified staffs as we move towards the 79th regular Session of the Texas Legislature. Allison Billodeau, will serve as Legislative Director and head up my Capitol office, Debbie McLain will remain as Administrative Assistant in the district office in Canton, but will be in Austin during the session. Karen Starks will continue to serve as Administrative Assistant in the Greenville district office and Jeannie Prendergast will continue to serve as District Associate and during the session will spend most of her time in the Canton office. We will also have several interns that will assist us in our Capitol office during the session.

Susan and I want to extend to each of you greetings for the greatest of Christmas joy as you and your family celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We consider it a privilege and honor to represent you and Texas in the Texas House of Representatives and pray that you will enjoy happiness and peace as we go into 2005.

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** phone number **512-463-0880**. **Canton District office** is located in The American National Bank Building in Canton on Highway 243: **P. O. Box 999, Canton, TX, 75103** phone number **903-567-0921**. **Greenville District office** is located in The Paul Mathews Exchange Building, Suite 802, 2500 Stonewall, Greenville phone number **903-455-0971**. Email: **dan.flynn@house.state.tx.us**.

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God bless you and God bless Texas,

Dan Flynn
State Representative, District - 2

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