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LEGISLATIVE TEA PARTY CAUCUS MAKES GREAT STRIDES

Orientation draws over 300 TEA Party organizers to Austin

AUSTIN, TEXAS – The TEA Party Caucus has been very active since coming together just a few weeks ago. The caucus, third largest in the legislature with 57 members, held an orientation for TEA Party groups from all across Texas. Over 300 TEA Party organizers, representing hundreds of thousands of voters, came to Austin to participate in a nearly four hour overview covering the legislative process, an outline of the budget, healthcare, redistricting, and a question and answer session with members of the caucus. "The idea was to have a first ever citizens' orientation similar to what newly elected legislators receive before session," explained caucus vice-chair Rep. Phil King.

"From the beginning, one of the goals of our caucus was to help citizens become more empowered by learning the legislative process," stated caucus founder Senator Dan Patrick. "The more knowledge the people have about how government works, the better government will be."

"Saturday's orientation was a great opportunity for those of us around the state to learn more about the legislative process from our elected officials," stated Leslie Haight, TEA Party Caucus Advisory Committee. "The information regarding the budgeting challenges we face this session was especially eye-opening." Dean Wright, TEA Party organizer agreed, "This enlightening presentation provided valuable insight to the legislative process that can

be used by the grassroots attendees to impact legislation much more effectively."

In addition to the orientation, over the past month the caucus has met with many TEA Party organizers from around the state. The purpose was to listen to what they believe are the major issues they want the legislature to address this session. Topping the list was balancing the budget without raising taxes. "Those who think the TEA Parties from across the State are going to go away are sadly mistaken. The citizens of Texas have had enough. They will hold us accountable for our votes and actions and they will be a major driving force in 2012 and beyond," stated Flynn.

Last week the caucus met to discuss the issues presented to them by the TEA Party groups. The caucus has set an agenda for the session that reflects their support for the issues supported by the TEA Party. With one exception, the agenda does not support specific legislation, but broad principles. With many bills filed on the same issues supported by the TEA Party, the caucus decided it was too soon to get behind specific legislation. "The committees need to hear testimony and members need to study and discuss the various bills that have been filed," said caucus board member Rep. Allen Fletcher. "While the list of issues the caucus will support focuses on the major ones presented to us, they are by no means the only issues presented to us," clarified caucus board member Rep. Dan Flynn.



Texas Legislative TEA Party Caucus Statement of Principle

It is the purpose and intent of the members of the Texas Legislative TEA Party Caucus to promote and secure:

- a balanced budget without increased taxation;
- a secure Texas border and an end to illegal immigration;
- the reassertion of the 10th Amendment and repeal of all federal laws in contradiction thereof;
- election integrity, including passage of voter identification legislation;
- advancement of Texans' 2nd Amendment rights.

"These issues were the top five issues presented to us," remarked caucus vice-chair Rep. Beverly Woolley. The one specific bill the caucus did agree to support was House Joint Resolution 50, by Rep. Creighton, and the companion legislation, Senate Joint Resolution 14, by Senator Patrick. These bills affirm the sovereign rights of Texas under the 10th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Rep. Creighton passed this measure with almost unani-

mous support in the House in 2009. So far, all 19 Republicans have co-authored SJT 14 in the Senate.

The Senate has already passed a photo voter I.D. bill. The House is expected to take up the legislation in the very near future. "We are off to a quick start on the issues brought to us by the TEA Party," noted Senator Patrick. "But, we are just beginning."

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