



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
JOE STRAUS
SPEAKER

November 10, 2010

Dear Representative Chisum:

Have you no shame? At a time when we should be celebrating the historic Republican gains of the recent election, and focusing on the business of the state, you have instead engaged in a campaign of distortions and attacks that have subjected the membership to a constant strain of negativity solely to return power to a small faction that lost it in January, 2009.

In your letter you mention a speaker should protect the members. I agree. That's why I have conducted this race by appealing directly to members. The calls, emails and letters threatening Republicans with future primary opposition if they support my candidacy have clearly not been generated by me, or my supporters. In fact, it is apparent to the most casual observer that the nasty tenor of this race emanates from you and your supporters, who are obviously behind the effort to hijack the speaker's race from the membership and subject it to the influence of outside forces. You can't claim to protect the members while at the same time activating outside forces to threaten them.

You also can't protect the membership while claiming several of them are complicit in legislative bribery. Fortunately, the facts do not back up your claim in any sense. I have conducted myself according to the highest ethical standards since being elected speaker, setting a new, more respectful tone for the Texas House. My efforts to elect more Republicans were completely legal, and helped bring about the largest gains in the history of our party. You may want to criminalize the electing of our Republican colleagues, but as a lifelong Republican I am elated by our success. I stand by our efforts to elect good conservatives, and I stand by the integrity of our members that you have impugned with false allegations.

What I won't condone is what your allies have requested: a quid pro quo in order to maintain the speakership. What they have requested is not just offensive, but illegal. Under no uncertain terms should a speaker, or a candidate for speaker, reveal committee assignments two months prior to the start of session in exchange for support from a certain political faction.

If you truly believe that the Texas House of Representatives should be protected from the kind of scorched earth campaign unleashed by your allies, then I call on you to put a stop to it for the sake of the membership. Stop the threatening letters, mean-spirited emails, and angry phone calls. Let each member of the House, elected to represent the views of their constituents, decide this election free of such divisive hostility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Straus".

Joe R. Straus
Speaker