



Texas House of Representatives

November 5, 2010

Dear Colleague,

As House chairs appointed in 2009, we write to you today to express our support for Speaker Straus and advancing the conservative agenda on several critical public policy fronts.

As you know, last session Democrats were successful in shutting down the business of the House for five critical days because of their opposition to a new law requiring a photo ID in order to vote. We are committed to bringing this issue back to the floor, and passing a photo ID requirement as a protection against voter fraud.

As constitutionally mandated, we will pass a balanced budget in the upcoming session and we are committed to ensuring the state's funding priorities reflect fiscally conservative policies. Last session, under Speaker Straus' leadership, we cut general revenue spending by \$1.7 billion, cut taxes for 40,000 small businesses, and refrained from tapping the "Rainy Day Fund." Because of this budgetary discipline, we are in much better shape than most states, but our upcoming challenge is great nonetheless. The Speaker has already committed to having an introduced budget that comes within available revenue, does not raise taxes, and does not assume use of the Rainy Day Fund. We strongly support him in this approach.

With the once-a-decade requirement to redraw legislative and congressional lines, our goal is to ensure the voices and views of Texas voters are reflected in the makeup of new districts. Texas is a conservative state, the people have elected a conservative legislature, and we will draw districts that reflect the will of the people.

With so many Texans concerned about job losses, we will also be very focused on boosting our economy, and ensuring businesses are not stifled by over-taxation, excess regulation or unfair litigation. Our goal is for all willing and able Texans to be productive members of our economy going into the next decade.

Lastly, we recognize the need for stricter border enforcement and enforcement of immigration laws. We will continue to fund law enforcement operations along the border, end the practice of sanctuary cities, and support the ability of law enforcement to uphold all of our laws. The federal government has failed to act and we must do what we can.

We have an ally on all these issues in Speaker Straus. We have found him to be a staunch fiscal conservative in the model of President Reagan, whom he once served in Washington. He supports limited government, states' rights, and the common sense, conservative agenda we

have outlined in this letter, and will ensure the conservative views articulated at the ballot box on November 2nd are not only heard on the floor of the House, but voted on.

We look forward to working with you on these and other conservative issues during the 82nd Regular Session of the Legislature.

Sincerely,

Dennis Bonnen -- Chairman of Land & Resource Management

Dan Branch -- Chairman of Higher Education

Byron Cook -- Chairman of Environmental Regulation

Rob Eissler -- Chairman of Public Education

Charlie Geren -- Chairman of House Administration

Harvey Hilderbran -- Chairman of Select Committee on Special Purpose Districts

Chuck Hopson -- Chairman of General Investigating & Ethics

Todd Hunter -- Chairman of Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence

Jim Keffer -- Chairman of Energy Resources

Lois Kolkhorst -- Chairwoman of Public Health

John Otto -- Chairman of Select Committee on Fiscal Stability

Larry Phillips -- Chairman of Select Committee on Transportation Funding

Jim Pitts -- Chairman of Appropriations

Todd Smith -- Chairman of Elections

John Smithee -- Chairman of Insurance

Burt Solomons -- Chairman of State Affairs

Vicki Truitt -- Chairwoman of Pensions, Investments & Financial Services

John Zerwas -- Chairman of Select Committee on Federal Legislation