



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
JOE STRAUS
SPEAKER

November 5, 2010

Dear Members and Members-elect,

Congratulations on your election to the Texas House of Representatives. I look forward to working with you as we conduct the people's business in a respectful and dedicated way.

There is much work to be done. As you know, we will face a substantial budget shortfall when we convene in January. And while I am proud that we cut spending last session for the second time since World War II, and that we made further spending reductions during the interim, we have many tough budget decisions ahead. I am committed to passing a fiscally conservative budget with no new taxes next session. We have already spent many months preparing for the next session, analyzing what constitutes necessary expenditures and what can be cut. The introduced budget will have no new taxes and will not spend any money from the "Rainy Day" Fund.

On November 2nd, the voters sent a clear message about limited government and fiscal restraint. They also rejected over-reaching top-down leadership that is so common in Washington. What voters want is less control in Washington and more control at the state and local level. Be assured, my leadership style will allow you, the locally elected leaders, to pursue appropriate solutions to the issues that are important to you and your district.

On the first day of each legislative session each member of the House starts the session with exactly the same power as every other member. We each take to the floor with the temporary power loaned to us by our constituency, all equals among peers. With the adoption of House rules and the election of a speaker, we transfer some of that power to the chair. We do this to achieve orderly debate and operation of the House. However, the members of the House are still in charge. A speaker should not be heavy-handed and impose his philosophy on the members, instead the speaker's agenda should always be the agenda of the House as a whole. That is exactly how a representative democracy should work, and it is how I have led since being elected speaker two years ago.

With the opportunity to begin filing bills on Monday, I know you are anxious to get moving on the priorities important to your constituents. I want to help facilitate a successful session for the people you represent. In the coming days, I'll be talking to you, getting your thoughts and ideas about how to tackle the budget and many other critical issues. My door is always open as I seek to administer the House in a way that is fair and respectful to each member.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joe Straus".

Joe Straus