

SENATE JOURNAL

EIGHTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE — REGULAR SESSION

AUSTIN, TEXAS

PROCEEDINGS

FIRST DAY

(Tuesday, January 8, 2013)

In accordance with the Constitution and Laws of the State of Texas, the Senate of the Eighty-third Legislature met in the Senate Chamber of the State Capitol on Tuesday, the eighth day of January, 2013, at 12:00 noon.

The Honorable David Dewhurst, Lieutenant Governor and President of the Senate, called the Senate to order.

The Reverend Dr. Tom Pace III, Saint Luke's United Methodist Church, Houston, offered the invocation as follows:

God of all times, all ages, all people, we gather in this place overwhelmed with gratitude. We are so proud of our great state and the spirit that blows through our plains and hills, our cities and small towns. We are so thankful for the opportunity to serve. And yet, along with that gratitude, each person here feels the burden of responsibility, the weight of the mantle of the offices we hold. Each of our constituencies calls us to specific agendas, and we want to honor their trust in us. But we know we are called to do more than mirror popular opinion. We know that leadership is more than conventional wisdom. There are hard choices before this body and problems to be solved. There are people counting on those here to do what needs to be done—children and the elderly, the sick and the hungry, businesses and families and schools and institutions of all sorts—all need us to make decisions that are not easy ones. We need You to reveal the way forward to us. We are called to courage. We are called to wisdom. There are walls waiting to be broken down. There are new solutions waiting to be unveiled. There are new opportunities just around the corner. God, lead this body. We are ready to follow, so show us the way. Give those gathered here the humility and discernment to put away our arrogance and be overcome by Your power and by Your love. Amen.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The death of Senator Mario Gallegos, Jr., was acknowledged by both Lieutenant Governor Dewhurst and Senator John Whitmire.

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

The following message from the Secretary of State was read and was filed with the Secretary of the Senate:

THE STATE OF TEXAS

Secretary of State

I, JOHN STEEN, Secretary of State of the State of Texas, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that according to the records of this office the attached is a true and correct list, in alphabetical order, of the members of the Senate of the 83rd Legislature, 2013, whose election on November 6, 2012, has been duly and legally certified to this office.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto signed my name officially and caused to be impressed hereon the Seal of State at my office in the City of Austin, Texas this 11th day of December, 2012.

(Seal)

/s/John Steen
Secretary of State

ROLL CALL OF SENATORS-ELECT

The President directed the Secretary of the Senate to call the roll of Senators-elect as certified by the Secretary of State.

The roll was called and the following Senators-elect answered to their names:

The Honorable Brian Birdwell, representing the Twenty-second Senatorial District composed of: Bosque, Ellis, Falls, Hill, Hood, Johnson, McLennan, Navarro, Somervell, and part of Tarrant counties.

The Honorable Donna Campbell, representing the Twenty-fifth Senatorial District composed of: Part of Bexar, Comal, part of Guadalupe, part of Hays, Kendall, and part of Travis counties.

The Honorable John Carona, representing the Sixteenth Senatorial District composed of: Part of Dallas County.

The Honorable Wendy Davis, representing the Tenth Senatorial District composed of: Part of Tarrant County.

The Honorable Bob Deuell, representing the Second Senatorial District composed of: Part of Dallas, Delta, Fannin, Hopkins, Hunt, Kaufman, Rains, Rockwall, and Van Zandt counties.

The Honorable Robert Duncan, representing the Twenty-eighth Senatorial District composed of: Baylor, Borden, Childress, Coke, Coleman, Concho, Cottle, Crane, Crosby, Dawson, Dickens, Eastland, Fisher, Floyd, Foard, Garza, Hale, Hardeman, Haskell, Hockley, Irion, Jones, Kent, Kimble, King, Knox, Lamb, Lubbock, Lynn, Mason, McCulloch, Menard, Mitchell, Motley, Nolan, Reagan, Runnels, Schleicher, Scurry, Shackelford, Stephens, Sterling, Stonewall, Sutton, part of Taylor, Terry, Throckmorton, Tom Green, Upton, Ward, and Wilbarger counties.

The Honorable Rodney Ellis, representing the Thirteenth Senatorial District composed of: Part of Fort Bend and part of Harris counties.

The Honorable Kevin Eltife, representing the First Senatorial District composed of: Bowie, Camp, Cass, Franklin, Gregg, Harrison, Lamar, Marion, Morris, Panola, Red River, Rusk, Smith, Titus, Upshur, and Wood counties.

The Honorable Craig Estes, representing the Thirtieth Senatorial District composed of: Archer, Clay, part of Collin, Cooke, part of Denton, Erath, Grayson, Jack, Montague, Palo Pinto, Parker, Wichita, Wise, and Young counties.

The Honorable Troy Fraser, representing the Twenty-fourth Senatorial District composed of: Bandera, Bell, Blanco, Brown, Burnet, Callahan, Comanche, Coryell, Gillespie, Hamilton, Kerr, Lampasas, Llano, Mills, San Saba, part of Taylor, and part of Travis counties.

The Honorable Kelly Hancock, representing the Ninth Senatorial District composed of: Part of Dallas and part of Tarrant counties.

The Honorable Glenn Hegar, representing the Eighteenth Senatorial District composed of: Aransas, Austin, Burleson, Calhoun, Colorado, DeWitt, Fayette, part of Fort Bend, Goliad, Gonzales, part of Harris, Jackson, Lavaca, Lee, Matagorda, part of Nueces, Refugio, Victoria, Waller, Washington, and Wharton counties.

The Honorable Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa, representing the Twentieth Senatorial District composed of: Brooks, part of Hidalgo, Jim Wells, and part of Nueces counties.

The Honorable Joan Huffman, representing the Seventeenth Senatorial District composed of: Part of Brazoria, part of Fort Bend, and part of Harris counties.

The Honorable Eddie Lucio, Jr., representing the Twenty-seventh Senatorial District composed of: Cameron, part of Hidalgo, Kenedy, Kleberg, and Willacy counties.

The Honorable Jane Nelson, representing the Twelfth Senatorial District composed of: Part of Denton and part of Tarrant counties.

The Honorable Robert Nichols, representing the Third Senatorial District composed of: Anderson, Angelina, Cherokee, Hardin, Henderson, Houston, Jasper, Liberty, part of Montgomery, Nacogdoches, Newton, Orange, Polk, Sabine, San Augustine, San Jacinto, Shelby, Trinity, and Tyler counties.

The Honorable Dan Patrick, representing the Seventh Senatorial District composed of: Part of Harris County.

The Honorable Ken Paxton, representing the Eighth Senatorial District composed of: Part of Collin and part of Dallas counties.

The Honorable José Rodríguez, representing the Twenty-ninth Senatorial District composed of: Culberson, El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, and Presidio counties.

The Honorable Charles Schwertner, representing the Fifth Senatorial District composed of: Brazos, Freestone, Grimes, Leon, Limestone, Madison, Milam, Robertson, Walker, and Williamson counties.

The Honorable Kel Seliger, representing the Thirty-first Senatorial District composed of: Andrews, Armstrong, Bailey, Briscoe, Carson, Castro, Cochran, Collingsworth, Dallam, Deaf Smith, Donley, Ector, Gaines, Glasscock, Gray, Hall, Hansford, Hartley, Hemphill, Howard, Hutchinson, Lipscomb, Loving, Martin, Midland, Moore, Ochiltree, Oldham, Parmer, Potter, Randall, Roberts, Sherman, Swisher, Wheeler, Winkler, and Yoakum counties.

The Honorable Larry Taylor, representing the Eleventh Senatorial District composed of: Part of Brazoria, part of Galveston, and part of Harris counties.

The Honorable Carlos I. Uresti, representing the Nineteenth Senatorial District composed of: Part of Atacosa, part of Bexar, Brewster, Crockett, Dimmit, Edwards, Frio, Kinney, Maverick, Medina, Pecos, Real, Reeves, Terrell, Uvalde, Val Verde, and Zavala counties.

The Honorable Leticia Van de Putte, representing the Twenty-sixth Senatorial District composed of: Part of Bexar County.

The Honorable Kirk Watson, representing the Fourteenth Senatorial District composed of: Bastrop and part of Travis counties.

The Honorable Royce West, representing the Twenty-third Senatorial District composed of: Part of Dallas County.

The Honorable John Whitmire, representing the Fifteenth Senatorial District composed of: Part of Harris County.

The Honorable Tommy Williams, representing the Fourth Senatorial District composed of: Chambers, part of Galveston, part of Harris, Jefferson, and part of Montgomery counties.

The Honorable Judith Zaffirini, representing the Twenty-first Senatorial District composed of: Part of Atascosa, Bee, part of Bexar, Caldwell, Duval, part of Guadalupe, part of Hays, Jim Hogg, Karnes, La Salle, Live Oak, McMullen, San Patricio, Starr, part of Travis, Webb, Wilson, and Zapata counties.

OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED TO SENATORS-ELECT

The President directed the Senators-elect to proceed to the Bar of the Senate.

Chief Justice Wallace B. Jefferson administered the Constitutional Oath of Office to the Senators-elect as follows:

I, _____, do solemnly swear, that I will faithfully execute the duties of the office of Senator of the State of Texas, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States and of this state, so help me God.

The President announced that a quorum of the Senate was present.

APPRECIATION EXTENDED

The President extended appreciation to Chief Justice Wallace B. Jefferson for his assistance in the opening session of the 83rd Legislature.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The President acknowledged the presence of his wife, Patricia, and his daughter, Carolyn Bivins.

The President acknowledged the presence of former Congressman Rick Santorum; Attorney General Greg Abbott; Chief Justice Wallace B. Jefferson; Justices Debra Lehrmann, Jeffrey Boyd, and Don Willett; Railroad Commissioner David Porter; Railroad Commission Chair Barry Smitherman; Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson; and Commissioner of Agriculture Todd Staples.

The Senate welcomed its guests.

SENATE RESOLUTION 1 (Caucus Report)

Senator Whitmire offered the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. CAUCUS REPORT. At a caucus held in the offices of the senate attended by 29 members of the senate, the caucus made the recommendations for the operation of the senate contained in this resolution.

SECTION 2. SENATE OFFICERS. (a) Senate officers for the 83rd Legislature are:

- (1) Secretary of the Senate—Patsy Spaw;
- (2) Calendar Clerk—Linda Tubbs;
- (3) Doorkeeper—Austin Osborn;
- (4) Enrolling Clerk—Patience Worrel;
- (5) Journal Clerk—Polly Emerson; and
- (6) Sergeant-at-arms—Rick DeLeon.

(b) Officers named in this section serve at the will of the senate.

SECTION 3. PARLIAMENTARIAN. The parliamentarian, Karina Davis, is named by the lieutenant governor and serves at the will of the lieutenant governor. The parliamentarian is a senate officer.

SECTION 4. EMPLOYEES. (a) The lieutenant governor may employ staff for the office of the lieutenant governor at salaries set by the lieutenant governor.

(b) Each senator may employ staff for the senator's office at salaries set by the senator.

(c) The chairman of each committee may employ staff of the chair's selection as needed by the committee. A committee employee shall be compensated in amounts similar to the compensation paid to persons in similar senate positions.

(d) The secretary of the senate may employ other staff necessary for the operation of the senate at salaries approved by the administration committee.

(e) The lieutenant governor, the secretary of the senate, and each senator may use the assistance of any assistant sergeant-at-arms or other available senate employee for any and all services needed in and about the senate.

(f) In this resolution, "senate employee" includes an employee of the lieutenant governor, the secretary of the senate, a senator, a senate committee, and any other person compensated from funds appropriated for the operation of the senate.

SECTION 5. DUTIES OF ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE. (a) In addition to the duties of the administration committee expressly imposed by this resolution, the committee shall take actions necessary to ensure that the administrative operations of the senate comply with applicable law and are conducted effectively and efficiently.

(b) The committee shall establish appropriate and necessary controls over contracts, inventory, and property management.

(c) The committee may delegate any of its responsibilities to the committee chair or to the secretary of the senate to be performed under the general supervision of the committee.

(d) Policies adopted by the administration committee must be consistent with the provisions of this resolution. To the extent of a conflict between a policy and this resolution, this resolution prevails.

(e) Policies adopted by the administration committee are subject to the will of the senate, and a majority of the senate may reject or modify any policy adopted by the committee.

SECTION 6. EMPLOYMENT AND PERSONNEL POLICIES. (a) The administration committee may adopt and enforce personnel and employment policies governing senate employees.

(b) The administration committee may not adopt a policy that limits the salary of an employee of the lieutenant governor, a senator, or a senate committee, except that the administration committee may require approval by that committee of any senate committee employee salary that is proposed to exceed \$5,000 a month.

SECTION 7. MEMBER'S EMPLOYEE LEAVE POLICY. (a) An employee of a senator accrues vacation leave, compensatory leave, or sick leave in accordance with policies adopted by the senator consistent with the requirements of this section.

(b) An employee may accrue vacation leave, compensatory leave, or sick leave only if the employee files a monthly time record with the senate human resources office. Time records are due not later than the 10th day of the following month.

(c) Compensatory time must be used not later than the last day of the 12th month following the month in which the time was accrued.

(d) An employee is not entitled to compensation for accrued but unused compensatory time.

SECTION 8. OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT. An employee of the senate may not be employed by and receive compensation from any other person during the term of senate employment without the permission of the employee's senate employer.

SECTION 9. WORK HOURS. An employee shall report to work at the time, and work for the number of hours, set by the employee's senate employer.

SECTION 10. LIMIT ON MONTHLY STAFF SALARY AND TRAVEL EXPENSES. (a) The total amount of staff salaries and intrastate staff travel expenses for each senator may not exceed \$38,000 per month.

(b) This monthly amount accrues on the first day of the month and may not be expended prior to the month in which it accrues, but any unexpended portion for a month may be carried forward from one month to the next and expended until the end of the fiscal year.

(c) An unexpended amount remaining at the end of the fiscal year, not to exceed \$10,000, may be carried forward to the next fiscal year. The total balance of unexpended funds accumulated may not exceed \$20,000 at the end of any fiscal biennium.

SECTION 11. SENATORS' EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT AND PER DIEM. (a) The secretary of the senate shall provide for the reimbursement of the expenses of each senator and the payment of each senator's per diem in accordance with law, this resolution, and the rules of the Texas Ethics Commission.

(b) The per diem rate to be paid to each senator for the 83rd Legislature is \$150.

SECTION 12. OTHER SENATE EXPENSES. (a) The lieutenant governor, the secretary of the senate, and each senator may incur expenses for carrying out official duties, including expenses for items such as subscriptions, stationery, postage, and telecommunications.

(b) Expenses under this section shall be paid from the contingent expense fund of the senate.

SECTION 13. PAYMENT OF SALARIES AND EXPENSES. (a) Salaries and expenses authorized by this resolution shall be paid from the contingent expense fund as provided by this section.

(b) Vouchers for payment of any expense, including salaries and travel expenses, must be signed by the chair of the administration committee and the secretary of the senate.

(c) The administration committee shall adopt policies regarding the presentation of timely, properly completed, and signed vouchers.

SECTION 14. DESIGNATION FOR ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS AND FUNCTIONS. (a) The administration committee shall designate a senator or any employee to attend an official meeting of a national governmental organization during a session of the 83rd Legislature. The person designated is entitled to reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses.

(b) The lieutenant governor may designate a senator to represent the senate at ceremonies and ceremonial functions. The necessary expenses of the senator and necessary staff for this purpose shall be paid pursuant to a budget adopted by the administration committee.

SECTION 15. ELECTRONIC RECORDING BY MEMBER PROHIBITED. No member of the senate may electronically record a private conversation held within the brass rail on the senate floor during a legislative session without the knowledge and consent of all participants to the conversation.

SECTION 16. JOURNAL. The secretary of the senate shall provide for the printing of not more than 250 copies of the daily journal. Of that number:

(1) 140 shall be furnished to the house of representatives;

(2) four shall be furnished to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission;

(3) four shall be furnished to the Legislative Reference Library; and

(4) the remainder shall be apportioned among the senators and the lieutenant governor.

SR 1 was read and was adopted by the following vote: Yeas 30, Nays 0.

OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED TO OFFICERS OF THE SENATE

The President directed the officers of the Senate to proceed to the Bar of the Senate.

The President administered the Constitutional Oath of Office to the officers as follows:

I, _____, do solemnly swear, that I will faithfully execute the duties of the office of _____ of the Senate of the State of Texas, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States and of this state, so help me God.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The President acknowledged the presence of Governor Rick Perry.

The Senate welcomed its guest.

ADDRESS BY GOVERNOR

Yesterday, we heard from the comptroller, and the news was good.

It confirmed much of what we've known over the past two years: that the Texas economy is healthy and growing, and thanks to the hard work and dedication of people working all across this state, the revenue forecast is up, and up significantly.

Again, all good news, and a complete change from the forecast we faced just two years ago.

At that time, we were still dealing with the effects of an ugly national recession, and much of the talk, both in the newspapers and around town, surrounded not whether we'd have to raise taxes, but how much we'd have to raise them to keep our state afloat.

As you all know, that's not the path we chose.

We chose the responsible path, the fiscally-conservative path, and that path has led us here today.

We sat down, separated our wants from our needs, prioritized, and tightened our belts, wherever necessary, and wherever possible.

Far from the catastrophe many predicted for us at the time, that approach helped our economy improve more quickly, and more profoundly, than many had expected.

The main lesson to draw from that story is simple, when people keep more of their own money it's better for them, it's better for their families, and it's better for the state.

That's a lesson we must take to heart as we begin the 83rd Legislature.

Trust me when I tell you that there are interests all across this state who view Monday's revenue estimate as the equivalent of ringing a dinner bell.

They all want more for their causes, they all figure we have money pouring out of our ears now, and they all have your address and phone number.

However, in the face of that kind of pressure, we have to remember that Monday's revenue estimate represents not a chance to spend freely, but an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the very policies that have made Texas economically strong in the first place.

It's also a chance to put our fiscal house in order for the years to come.

That's why, over the past several months, I have called for major budgetary reforms that include reducing diversions, a stricter constitutional limit on spending, a renewed commitment to stopping any and all new taxes or tax increases, and stopping any attempt to raid the Rainy Day Fund for ongoing expenses.

For the sake of all Texas taxpayers, we must control the appetite for more spending.

We need to stop writing IOUs to the next budget, and delaying payments we know will come due.

We need to reduce the use of fees and dedicated accounts for anything other than the purpose for which the fees were collected, and if we're not going to use them in the way proposed, stop collecting them.

With a better budgetary picture, now is the time to set the books straight and improve the fiscal outlook for future legislatures.

It's also time to take a hard look at providing tax relief.

We need to ensure consumers and employers alike have more cash on hand to pay their bills, hire more people, and invest in new efforts.

We need to reduce the demands on our innovators so they're free to innovate, and able to turn their great ideas into great success.

We need to continue streamlining our government, do more with the resources we have available, and continue delivering needed services in an effective, and efficient, manner.

Of course, budgetary issues aren't all you will be tasked with.

We must deal with infrastructure needs in water, energy and transportation, both for now and stretching into the future.

We need to find the right ways to educate our workforce, whether that means a college degree or technical certification, so employers can continue to count on finding the best and brightest here in Texas.

We need to reform our laws to make it harder for people to abuse our public assistance and unemployment insurance systems, by authorizing drug screenings for those programs.

We also need to better protect our most vulnerable citizens, the unborn, by expanding the ban on abortion to any baby that can feel the pain of the procedure, and putting in place common-sense oversights on clinics and physicians involved.

These are just a few of the issues we'll address this session, and I look forward to working with Governor Dewhurst and each of you in doing the people's business over the next 140 days.

At the end of the day, I'm certain you'll work together in the best interest of our state, and merit the faith placed in you by the millions of Texans who put you here.

May God bless you and, through you, may He continue to bless the great State of Texas.

(Note: Prepared text)

MOTION IN WRITING

Senator Eltife offered the following Motion In Writing:

I move that a committee of five Members of the Senate be appointed by the President to notify the House of Representatives that the Senate is organized and ready to transact business.

ELTIFE

The Motion In Writing was read and was adopted without objection.

Accordingly, the President appointed the following Committee to Notify the House of Representatives: Senators Taylor, Chair; Hancock, Hinojosa, Schwertner, and Uresti.

AT EASE

The President at 12:38 p.m. announced the Senate would stand At Ease subject to the call of the Chair.

IN LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The President at 12:47 p.m. called the Senate to order as In Legislative Session.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES NOTIFIED

The Committee to Notify the House of Representatives that the Senate was organized and ready to transact business appeared at the Bar of the Senate and Senator Taylor notified the President and Members that the committee had performed its duty.

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE EIGHTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION

The President announced that the time had arrived for the election of President Pro Tempore of the 83rd Legislature, Regular Session.

Senator Zaffirini placed in nomination the name of Senator Leticia Van de Putte for the office of President Pro Tempore of the 83rd Legislature, Regular Session.

On motion of Senator Eltife and by unanimous consent, the nominating speech by Senator Zaffirini and the remarks made to second the nomination were ordered reduced to writing and printed in the *Senate Journal* as follows:

Senator Zaffirini: Mr. President and Members, it is with great joy and love that I rise to nominate our beloved friend and colleague, Senator Leticia Van de Putte of San Antonio, to lead the Texas Senate as our President Pro Tempore. In this important capacity she will act as Governor of Texas whenever the Governor and Lieutenant Governor are out of state. On those days Texas will reflect its changing face under the administration of an Hispanic woman, Governor Leticia Van de Putte.

William Ward wrote so long ago, "The Lord wants us to grow, not to grovel; to soar, not to sink; to overcome, not to be overwhelmed; and to be victors, not victims." Senator Van de Putte personifies those words because she overcame obstacles, grew

into the acclaimed local, state, and national leader and beloved wife, mother, grandmother, daughter, sister, and friend whom Democrats and Republicans join hands to honor today.

As a child, Leticia Rosa San Miguel was nicknamed "*Chillona Berrinche*," which translates loosely into "Temper-tantrum-throwing crybaby" or, more simply, "Brat." Perhaps her frustration reflected the chauvinism and discrimination she endured at an early age. She was stunned in the third grade when she was sent home for speaking Spanish on the playground, which motivated her to master the language beautifully. When her ninth-grade boyfriend told her she couldn't run for Student Council President because "She was a girl," she ran and won. After some parents objected to her high school dance team's being led by a Mexican American, she excelled as their president.

And after her parents, a veteran and a teacher, could not buy a home in their preferred neighborhood because of deed restrictions that stated, "No Mexicans, No—I'm sorry to tell you, they used the N-Word with two g's, No Dogs," she was sensitized to the importance of fighting for social justice. One year before completing her pharmacy degree from UT-Austin, Leticia married Pete Van de Putte, who offered to share everything with her, including his favorite scripture, "Go forth and multiply." And multiply they did. In the first nine years of their marriage, they gave birth to six children: Nichole, Vanessa, Henry, Gregory, Isabella, and Paul. Today they also have six grandchildren: Julian, Jove, Marlo, Elliot, Asher, and Rex.

I'm not sure at what point the young Catholic became an advocate of Planned Parenthood, access to contraception, and sex education. As a working mother she excelled in multi-tasking and organizing, color-coding her children's personal, academic, and extracurricular activities, and lining them up while she was cooking so each one could tell her one thing and then go to the back of the line until they ran out of things to say. When her four-year-old daughter asked why mommy was running for State Representative, her seven-year-old sister answered, "Because there aren't enough mommies there." That cinched her decision to run and to prioritize issues that matter to families. Whenever she saw a wrong that needed to be righted, she wound up on advisory boards in areas as varied as airport, business, health, park, and social issues. Coupled with her work at her children's schools and in pharmacy circles, those organizations developed into her political network that culminated in her success in the Texas Senate.

As Chair of the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Military Installations, she has brought statewide and national attention to veterans' issues and to ensuring that the Texas Legislature reflects our gratitude and respect to Texas veterans and their families.

As Chair of the Senate Democratic Caucus for eight years, she helped develop bipartisan consensus on countless occasions and led the Democratic minority effectively on issues such as voter ID, sanctuary cities, and redistricting.

In 2003 when Governor Dewhurst knelt by her side and asked her not to filibuster redistricting, she answered, "Governor Dewhurst, please, get up. The last time a man knelt by my side with a proposal, I got pregnant six times!"

Having passed almost 400 bills, largely while serving on the Senate committees on Business and Commerce, Education, and State Affairs, she is recognized as one of our hardest-working, most effective, and best-informed Members—and certainly as the one with the most children.

As a national leader, Senator Van de Putte is in a league of her own in the Texas Senate. She has interacted effectively not only with Texans, such as President George Bush, but also with President Barack Obama, President Bill Clinton, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and a host of others. She's served as President of the National Conference of State Legislatures; President of the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislatures; Co-chair of the National Democratic Convention; member of the American Legacy Foundation Board (ALFB), which administers the \$1 billion budget of proceeds from the multi-state tobacco lawsuit settlement; and as a member of the National Assessments Governing Board (NAGB), which issues the "Nation's Report Card."

Her national and even international stature have garnered extensive media coverage, including profiles in statewide publications such as *Texas Monthly* and national publications such as the *Hispanic Journal*. She is the only Senator whose pathway to leadership is chronicled in a book, *Latina Legislator: Leticia Van de Putte and the Road to Leadership*, published by the A&M press.

It's no wonder that Senator Van de Putte has received countless awards for her public service and professional leadership. She's received, for example, the Hubert Humphrey Award, the highest award bestowed on pharmacists; the Charles Dick Award, the highest honor given only occasionally by the National Guard Association for leadership on behalf of the military in general and the National Guard in particular; the Edward R. Roybal Award for Outstanding Public Service, the highest award given by the National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO) for leadership on Hispanic issues; and the first annual Irrepressible Spirit Award from Prosumers International. I believe this award best captures her personality, her energy, her charisma, her enthusiasm, and her contagious smile.

Senator Van de Putte begins her days with a simple prayer: O God, for another day, for another morning, for another hour, for another minute, for another chance to live and serve Thee, I am grateful. Clearly, the Lord has answered her prayers, affording her wonderful opportunities to be of service to Him and to others—and for this, all of us are grateful.

Truly, she has embodied William Ward's words by growing, not groveling; soaring, not sinking; overcoming, not being overwhelmed; and being a victor, not a victim.

To paraphrase Ralph Waldo Emerson, she has gone where there was no path and left a trail for others to follow.

Mr. President and Members, I proudly and happily nominate our friend and colleague, Senator Leticia Van de Putte, to lead, to serve, and to leave a trail as our President Pro Tempore for the 83rd Texas Legislature and to serve as our next acting Governor of Texas. Thank you.

Senator Carona: Mr. President, I am not quite sure how to follow Dr. Zaffirini. I think that was one of your finest speeches, but I am so pleased at this time to second the nomination of Leticia Van de Putte to the position of President Pro Tempore of the Texas Senate.

Leticia and I actually began our careers at the same time, both sworn into the Texas House in 1991. It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve alongside her all these years.

In her words, which I hope are not really an omen of things to come, "There are so few of us left." And, Leticia, it is true, there are so few of us left, although I know we both delight in all of the new Members that have followed through that time.

With a last name like Carona, in Texas I am often mistaken for a Latino, while my heritage is in fact Italian. Leticia has the opposite problem: She is a Latina mistaken for an Italian. However, she has so many Italian-like qualities and traits it's easy to understand why.

First, she has style—who else could walk into the Senate Chamber wearing a fedora? You know, I know I tried, but the Sergeant wouldn't let me in the door. The closest I came was entering the Senate Chamber with a horse's head, and I am saving that reappearance for the voucher debate.

Well, she is also like an Italian because she loves food and wine. She loves wine so much I put her in charge of our alcohol working group in the committee I chair, which is the Business and Commerce Committee, which I can assure you, as an Italian, was an assignment not lightly made. By the way, last time I checked in on this working group, Leticia, glass in hand, had promised statehood to France. Good job, Leticia.

Finally, she is Italian because she is passionate about the things and people she cares about and sometimes even crosses the line in order to make a point, something I really don't know anything about.

Professionally, Leticia has a quality so few elected officials are able to attain—she has managed to retain her political focus and ambition while still remaining gracious and respectful to all her colleagues. And in that, she is a true stateswoman.

She has been instrumental in the passage of an amazing number of reforms. Let me just name a few of her accomplishments: the fair billing and pricing reform act on your phone bill and the creating of regional poison control centers. She passed a homestead exemption for disabled veterans and surviving spouses. She created the Burned Veteran Energy Discount in San Antonio, the Patient's Bill of Rights, the Texas Treasure Award, the Better Jobs Act, the Human Trafficking Task Force, and the Cybersecurity, Education, and Economic Development Council, and with that I am naming just a few.

She has also served as a Member of the committee I chair, which is the Business and Commerce Committee, and the committee's stepchild, if you will, the Windstorm Insurance Legislative Oversight Board—that's a mouthful—where, God bless her, she has been active in the legislative efforts to reform TWIA.

On the committee, not only has she been the only woman during my tenure, but she is the only woman serving among characters like our former colleagues Chris Harris and John Whitmire. Making—candidly, you wonder at times why she doesn't impulsively shout, curse, or involuntarily pace across the dais. Those of you that have served with those gentleman are well familiar.

She always comes well-prepared, though. Her questions are smart and her points are always well-articulated. She is a leading voice on the committee. And she really is truly a rose among many, many thorns, a nod to her middle name, Rose.

Leticia, herself, chairs the Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs, and I can think of no one more fitting. She is one of the most patriotic people that I have had the pleasure to know. She considers it an honor to work for the betterment of those that have faithfully served our country in uniform.

And if that weren't enough, and as mentioned earlier, she is a registered pharmacist, she has been a business owner, and she is a businesswoman today as she and her husband own a manufacturing firm, appropriately enough, making flags that have literally draped our nation.

I really hoped to punch up this speech with a few good stories about the Senator, but the truth is in my own experience and, frankly, in the experience of everyone I have asked about this, stories about Leticia generally fall in either one of two categories: either glowing reviews, talking of her kindness, her work ethic, her rhetorical skills, her patriotism, et cetera, or stories that are mostly inappropriate for a session like this. But I do have one. Back in 1991, Leticia, you may remember these days well, back in 1991, we sat as new House Members next to our classmate, Representative Will Hartnett, and Will has now just retired after 23 good years of service in the Texas House. Well, back in those days, Will was single, and, candidly, he was a bit shy, I guess by today's description, a bit of a dork. Well, Leticia was a mother and a wife. Well, let's just say she was worldly, or at least Will seemed to think so at the time. Well, by the time Leticia finished extolling the virtues of marriage and, well, let's just say, romance daily, Will didn't know whether to go out and find a girlfriend or a mail-order bride, but he did marry shortly thereafter.

I suspect Leticia's openness stems from the fact that she has raised a large family as you have heard a moment ago. On further reflection, I believe it is this experience that has probably best prepared her for her work in the Legislature. There are so many parallels when you begin to think about that, Leticia.

As the mother of six children, she sees very little that shocks her or surprises her. She has a sense of humor in just about any circumstance, and those of you that know her and love her, as many in this Chamber do, know this to be the case. She is willing to say the things no one wants to hear, though they need to, and she always fights the battles only a mother would fight.

Leticia treats us all like family, *la familia*, and for this the Senate is today a better body. Leticia, I was so honored when you asked me to speak on your behalf, and it is an honor to be here today as a part of this very special celebration. We love you.

Senator Birdwell: Thank you. Mr. President and Members, I am honored today in three capacities, as my capacity as a colleague, as a redshirt sophomore in this body, and Leticia knows what I am describing there, but most of all I rise in my capacity as a professional soldier to second the nomination of Senator Van de Putte to serve as

our President Pro Tempore of the 83rd Regular Session. In my slightly less than three years of service beside Senator Van de Putte as her Vice-chair, as she chaired the Veteran Affairs and Military Installations Committee, I've had the privilege to see her commitment to those who wear our nation's uniform. In fact, the very first bill I was offered the opportunity to joint author came from her in dealing with how the remains of our fallen soldiers will be treated in Texas courts. And it was a real treat to have this be the very first bill that I put my name on in this building. During my tenure as her Vice-chair, I've seen her support a number of things very passionately. She supported the property tax exemption for 100 percent disabled veterans and their surviving spouses. She supported the Texas Veterans Commission, adding a women's member coordinator on staff to ensure that the special needs of our lady veterans were being addressed by the Texas Veterans Commission. She supported college credit for heroes, ensuring military experiences of our veterans were translated into academic credits toward degree programs at our community, two-year, and four-year institutions, and state tuition for our servicemen and women at our higher institutions for all active military members that had been sent to Texas on permanent change of station orders to be assigned to Texas installations. And one that is pretty personal to me that I was very privileged to sign onto, she championed discounted utility payments for our indigent veterans who had suffered severe burns and are no longer able to regulate their body temperature. Governor Dewhurst, I certainly appreciate you keeping it really cold in here for me. Most of all, what is most impressive, is while she has never worn the uniform of our nation's warriors, she certainly has the heart of a warrior. While Senator Van de Putte and I have had our battles, and there will surely be more to come, I, and I know my other colleagues would agree, that Senator Van de Putte is not only a most respected foe when we disagree, but there is no more higher-valued ally that you want to bring her combat power to the table when we agree. Mr. President and Members, it is indeed my honor to second the nomination of Senator Leticia Van de Putte as President Pro Tempore of the 83rd Regular Session.

Senator Lucio: Members and Mr. President, it is an honor for me to second the nomination of my very dear friend, Senator Leticia Van de Putte.

We've already heard some of my colleagues speak about Leticia's great accomplishments as a stateswoman and as a tireless advocate for our state's most vulnerable populations—especially Texas' children, women, and working poor.

I'd like to now reflect, however, on those qualities of Leticia's I respect and admire most: Leticia is a woman who is deeply devoted to her family, to her mother, to her husband, and to her children and grandchildren. Leticia is also a person who commits every day to put her religious faith into action while serving the people of Texas. You see, I think it is these characteristics of Senator Van de Putte that make her the effective and influential lawmaker we know today.

Each day, Leticia approaches her work here in the Capitol with a mother's heart. The same love and compassion she shares with her family each day, she also carries with her to Austin. She shares it with her staff, with her constituents, and with her fellow Members in the Senate. In fact, I think I can safely say that Leticia Van de Putte has become a "mother figure" here in the Senate.

I have had the great pleasure to meet Senator Van de Putte's family over the years.

Now, before I get into singing Leticia's praises as a mother figure here in our Chamber, I have to briefly pause and give credit to Leticia's own mother, Ms. Belle Ortiz, and her father, Daniel San Miguel. I know both served as tremendous inspirations for Leticia.

I understand that every time her father, Daniel, would introduce her to people and they'd say, "Oh, what a pretty girl," he'd answer, "She's the smartest girl in her class." I know Senator Van de Putte would tell you today that she probably wasn't the smartest—Senator Van de Putte remains too modest—but her father made her believe it and gave her the confidence she needed to excel.

Senator Van de Putte's mother, Belle, also reinforced education, so that she could be self-reliant and wouldn't need a man to be successful. I understand that Belle would tell young Leticia, "Your generation of women will be the first that will not be defined by their daddy or their husband." Belle led by example and started the first high school mariachi program in Texas—a program that has been emulated throughout the state. Today, I know Belle and Leticia are like sisters, and not so long ago, the two traveled to Rome together to witness the beatification of an American nun.

Leticia's mother also gets credit for introducing Leticia to her husband, Pete. Leticia and Pete have celebrated 35 years of marriage together. In that time, they celebrated the birth of six children—Nichole, Vanessa, Henry, Gregory, Isabella, and Paul—and six grandchildren—Julian, Jove, Marlo, Elliot, Asher, and Rex.

Just like her parents did, Senator Van de Putte has stressed the importance of self-reliance through education to her children. Today, seldom a day goes by that she's not showing me pictures of her family on her iPhone or iPad, or proudly sharing stories about their success.

Leticia's daughter Vanessa is a graduate of Columbia College and today works as the Director of Events and Marketing at her father's business, Dixie Flag Company. Her son Henry graduated from Saint Mary's University and prior to becoming a production manager at Dixie Flag, worked at ESPN in New York City. He is married to Rena Van de Putte. Gregory went to the University of Dayton. He now owns a business, Storage Lifts Unlimited, and lives in Lakeway with his wife, Samantha, and three beautiful children. Isabella graduated from Texas A&M University—San Antonio and is a manager at Dixie Flag.

Leticia's youngest son, Paul, recently celebrated his graduation from Texas A&M University with a degree in Environmental Studies. Finally, Senator Van de Putte's daughter Nichole is a physician, OB/GYN. A quick story about Nichole: Not so long ago, she was a houseguest of mine down in the Rio Grande Valley. At the time, Nichole was completing her graduate medical education at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio's Regional Academic Health Center in Harlingen. Although I was very proud to open my home to Nichole and her family, I do have one complaint about the experience: I didn't get her to stay in the Valley to practice! I am, of course, only kidding. I wish Nichole, her husband, Jason, and their three children all the best. She has become like a second daughter to me and my wife, Minnie.

Today, I am confident Senator Van de Putte's family must be as proud of her as she is proud of them every day.

I met Senator Van de Putte back in 1990, when she was first elected to the Texas House. Since 1999, I have had the privilege of serving with her here in the Texas Senate, as well as on two committees, State Affairs and Business and Commerce.

Since the first day I met Leticia, I have been impressed with her drive, her work ethic, and her determination to meticulously understand every single piece of legislation she encounters. In committee, she never votes on a bill until she has a full understanding of its impact on the lives of everyday Texans.

When Senator Van de Putte is advancing her own legislative agenda, she is undeterred by any roadblocks. She speaks out passionately in any committee on bills that interest her, especially those supporting state services that are important to the well-being and livelihoods of the people of South Texas.

Despite what some may think, being an elected official is a full-time job. Outside of session, there are interim hearings and reports, and demands on legislators' time only increases, even while staff and budgets shrink. Nevertheless, Senator Van de Putte always rises to the occasion and can be counted on to be a responsive representative to her constituents. She truly is a great legislator.

Now all this hard work doesn't come without a lot of personal sacrifice. Over the years, Senator Van de Putte and I have bonded over how difficult it is to be away from family while in Austin. Still, I know it is her family that motivates her to work so hard. In truth, she works to build a better Texas for them. She works to ensure that the quality of life she wants for her own children and grandchildren is passed on to all Texas children.

The people of Senator Van de Putte's district are blessed to have a legislator that understands the importance of motherhood. They're blessed to have a legislator that understands the importance of getting an education, living in a secure community, and having economic development that provides the jobs necessary to lift themselves up and create a successful life.

I began these remarks by saying that Leticia Van de Putte has become a "mother figure" here in the Senate, and I think that's true.

I, for one, have found great strength in the spiritual fellowship I share with Senator Van de Putte. Every time I have been in need, I knew I could count on Leticia to be at my side providing support and guidance. She has joined me in deep prayer for those that are ill, including most recently our dearly departed colleague, Senator Mario Gallegos.

As my colleagues here know, often during past sessions, we Members have joined together for fellowship meetings where we've shared our life's obstacles and prayed for one another. We have weekly holy rosaries which she attends frequently. Senator Van de Putte would always inspire those in attendance with her remarks and prayers. She is always generous with her time and full of compassion for everyone she encounters.

Today's speeches by my colleagues make clear that Texas is a better place because of Senator Leticia Van de Putte.

I believe Senator Van de Putte exemplifies an adage made popular by Mother Teresa. I'll paraphrase: If we are to find peace, we need to remember that we belong to each other, that every man, woman, and child is our brother and sister. Senator Van de Putte never forgets this message. She wants to make a difference in people's lives, regardless of party or creed.

I feel so privileged to call her a friend.

La gente Hispana de el Estado de Tejas, y especialmente tu distrito en San Antonio, te felicita y te respeta muchísimo!

Te agradecemos los esfuerzos que haces diariamente para mejorar las vidas de todos los Tejanos de nuestro gran Estado de Tejas!

Dios te bendiga a ti y a tu linda familia!

With that, I now gladly second the nomination of Senator Leticia Van de Putte for the position of President Pro Tempore of the Texas Senate.

Thank you, Mr. President and Members.

Senator Ellis: Thank you, Mr. President. I, too, rise to second the nomination of Senator Van de Putte to be President Pro Tempore of the Senate. I am sure you all can tell from all of the great things we have said about her, we think pretty highly of Leticia Van de Putte. I do want you to know that I think I am the last person who will nominate her because we want to give her as much time as possible to be President Pro Tempore of the Senate. Senator Zaffirini made the point early on when she spoke how important this is. Sometimes when we do this the opening day of session, people don't really realize it's a big deal. Trust me, it's a big deal. You know we have a presidential inauguration coming up in a couple of weeks, and I can remember some years ago when Bill Clinton became President, a Governor of a southern state. He went up to be inaugurated, his Lieutenant Governor had become acting Governor, and the Lieutenant Governor, I think his name was Jim Guy Tucker, went to Washington, D.C., as well, and they had a Member of the State Senate who was President Pro Tempore pardon a few people. They still are trying to figure out how to put those people back in jail. So, it truly is a big deal.

Some years ago you all may recall, I had the privilege of being the President Pro Tem when the Governor of Texas was running for President. Then-Lieutenant Governor Rick Perry was known to travel a bit; I can say that because I am known to travel a bit as well. My staff speculated that it was not coincidence, Leticia, whenever we would get a letter saying that such and such pursuant to the Constitution, Rodney Ellis, Governor Bush will be out of the state on this date, if the Lieutenant Governor is not in town, you will be acting Governor of Texas. Then about two, three days later, I would get a letter from Governor Perry's office, Lieutenant Governor's office saying, pursuant to the Constitution such and such, you will be acting Governor if the Lieutenant Governor is out of the state. Now, they could have put it in one letter, but I assume they wanted to make sure if I need to take another trip to Africa, I could go on about my way and go to Africa so somebody else would be acting Governor of Texas. But she will have all the powers and all of the privileges that the Governor of Texas has on those days when Governor Perry and Lieutenant Governor Dewhurst are out of the state.

You know we are a big family here. We are a bipartisan family here. We agree on a lot of issues, we disagree on some issues, but we are family. Now, I don't know about you, but present company excluded, but there are some people in my family, I like them, I love them, but I don't want to be with them all of the time, and sometimes I have to limit my interaction. Leticia is one of those people in this body that helps bring us together, helps us figure out how to disagree without being disagreeable. No disrespect to the men in this body, but to be honest with you, I think all of the women that I have served with in this body do a much better job of sometimes toning it down when it really could get ugly. And that is a special trait to have. Leticia will be the second Latina in the history of Texas to be President Pro Tem of the Texas Senate. Leticia Van de Putte will be in a small club. I think only six women, including two of us on this floor today, have served as President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

Most of the things I want to talk about today somebody has said, I might just mention a couple. I am so proud of the work she did on creating veterans courts. Every time we pass by a veteran, many of them suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome and many of them are homeless. You ought to think about the work she and her colleagues have done on the veterans committee to really make life better for people who have fought to give us freedom in this country. And, Senator, we are all very appreciative of that.

I am very proud of the work that Leticia Van de Putte has done on anti-trafficking. It really is the modern slavery of our lifetime. It exists today and Texas is a major gateway for modern-day slavery, for trafficking, many of them coming from south of our border. Leticia really put a face on that problem. For the doctors on this floor and in this audience, she really got involved in this issue, as I recall it, because she got a call from a doctor in her district. It shows how everyday people can really have an impact on what we do. They picked the right person because when they called you, Leticia Van de Putte, because you have really become a nationally recognized leader on anti-trafficking issues.

The last issue that I want to comment on that I am really proud of you for leading the way on is our version of the Dream Act. Senator Santorum, I know that Governor Perry got a lot of heat for that on the presidential trail. Leticia Van de Putte carried that bill, was a leader on that bill in Texas. It is real straightforward if some person, regardless of legal status, graduates from a high school in this state, we give them the privilege of paying in-state tuition to go to one of our universities. It was tough when you did it. I think you had to do a great job of reaching across the aisle and bringing all of us along on that issue. And, Senator, we are very appreciative for your leadership on that.

Lastly, as I close on seconding this nomination, I again want to thank your family, you know, for all of us on this special day, you just think about the sacrifices that we make to be here. In a lot of ways, it is a little selfish. All of the soccer games, all of the recitals, all of the illnesses that you won't be around for, some husband or some wife will have to fill in that heavy load because we are here doing what we enjoy doing because it satisfies us to have an impact on the quality of life for the 26 million people in this state. But I know we are all very grateful to your family, Senator Van de Putte, and to all of our families for tolerating us and giving us the privilege to do the public business while they take care of our business back home.

So, I close by proudly seconding the motion, the nomination that Senator Zaffirini started with, in the name of all of those great members of the Van de Putte family that gave you, my sister, the privilege of being here for 13 years so you could earn this privilege today. Thank you, Mr. President.

On motion of Senator Zaffirini, Senator Van de Putte was elected President Pro Tempore by a rising vote of the Senate.

The President declared that the Honorable Leticia Van de Putte had been duly elected President Pro Tempore of the 83rd Legislature by acclamation.

The President appointed the following Committee to Escort Senator Van de Putte and her family to the President's Rostrum: Senators Davis, Eltife, West, Whitmire, and Williams.

Senator Van de Putte and her party were then escorted to the President's Rostrum by the committee.

OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED

The President administered the Constitutional Oath of Office to Senator Van de Putte as follows:

I, Leticia Van de Putte, do solemnly swear, that I will faithfully execute the duties of the office of President Pro Tempore of the Senate of the State of Texas, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States and of this state, so help me God.

ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

President Pro Tempore Van de Putte addressed the Senate as follows:

Lieutenant Governor Dewhurst, General Abbott, state officials, my dear colleagues, family, friends, and Senate staff: Thank you for this tremendous honor.

The first day of any legislative session is always an exciting one. Even when we anticipate a session might be tough, it's still a time when everything is new. A time when possibilities still abound. It's a time when we can be optimistic.

It's a time for vision. We look forward to what can be. We look at the issues that matter most to us and how we can make a positive change.

I've been extremely blessed to have experienced this moment of hope 11 times, and today for a 12th. The hope doesn't always turn out like we'd want it. Bills die. The legislative process takes a wrong direction. Sometimes laws don't have the effect you intended.

But we keep plugging away at this lawmaking business because of those moments when it does go right—those moments when we push our magnificent state in the right direction are exceedingly rewarding.

After more than two decades under the pink dome, I think people know what my passions are. I'm so fortunate to have played a part in making Texas a better place for veterans, including my father, Daniel San Miguel.

Could all of our brave veterans in attendance today please rise so that we may recognize them?

I'm also fortunate to have been in a position to help working families and parents.

This past session, I was happy to actually make life harder for some people—working with my colleagues and the Attorney General and Governor, we made things more difficult for human traffickers, giving prosecutors more power to crack down on this modern-day form of slavery.

This is a battle I'm proud to wage. To quote the great Abraham Lincoln, "Those who deny freedom to others, deserve it not for themselves; and, under a just God, cannot long retain it."

This session, I hope to make life easier for the survivors of trafficking, who badly need support services to recover from the horrible trauma they've endured.

This is, indeed, a time to be looking ahead. As we learned after the Census, this is a time of great change in Texas. Our state grew faster than any other state in the nation. And overwhelmingly, most of that growth came from minorities, and most of that from Hispanics. The face of our state is transforming, and that transformation brings with it new needs and new challenges.

Last spring, I was present at the dedication of the new Tejano monument on the Capitol grounds. It was a wonderful ceremony and an unforgettable tribute to our heritage. If you haven't yet visited the monument, just east of the south gate, I encourage you to head out there and see it before you leave today.

At the festivities, I stared out into a sea of faces reflecting the beautiful diversity of our state. As I did, I reflected on the journey Texas has made just in the two decades since I first took office. Go back to similar ceremonies at the beginning of my tenure in the Legislature, and the makeup of the crowd would have been much different.

Many of those faces that day were of Latino heritage, of course, but people of all colors and backgrounds assembled to celebrate the many different stories that meld to form the greatest state in the nation.

We were there to honor the past, but in reality we were looking at the future.

My future is here today. I thank our six beautiful children: Nichole, Vanessa, Henry, Gregory, Isabella, and Paul. If there were ever a glimpse at the future of our state, it is in our family portraits. Some of my six children are just as brown as you'd expect from a family named San Miguel, my maiden name. But my other children's appearances reflect the Belgian and French genes of my husband, Pete Van de Putte.

The majority of my grandchildren, despite their Latino heritage, have blue eyes. They are 75 percent Anglo, and they will someday be a minority in this state.

This is something to be embraced, not feared. Great things have emerged from the blending of our cultures.

Look at the great *conjunto* music that sprang up in San Antonio and South Texas. Tejanos heard the accordion music of their German-American neighbors, incorporated it into their traditions, and created a sound that is uniquely Texan. It is living proof that diversity is a strength.

Look at our food. Every December I distribute San Antonio tamales around the Capitol and they end up on plates at the Senate holiday party right next to the turkey and dressing.

Look at our celebrations. People from all corners of San Antonio and Texas come together to honor the heroes of the Alamo and the Battle of San Jacinto every April at a magnificent 10-day celebration called Fiesta.

As we move forward into this new Texas, let these examples be our guide. Instead of separating into groups, let us say to the world, "*Bienvenidos, y'all!*"

We must embrace these changes. But they are changes that will present us with challenges. If we meet these challenges head-on, Texas can reach the great heights to which we aspire. We can make that next great blend.

If we do not, history will remember us harshly as the generation that squandered an opportunity to build something grand.

We cannot miss this opportunity.

It will be a collective imperative to realize our duty, a duty reinforced by the oath we have just taken. A duty to invest in our future.

An investment in the human capital of Texas. We must invest in the education of Texans, all of them. Education is the pathway away from poverty. Education is the pathway to good jobs. Education provides the toolkit for self-sufficiency. Education is the fuel of our economic engine.

Two years ago, we did the people of Texas a disservice. The 82nd Legislature cut \$5.4 billion from public education. Our students and teachers need that investment.

I know we were going through tough times. Our national economy was in a recession. Our state's tax revenues were down, and we are required in this state to balance our budget.

But let this session be different. Let's begin with our goals. And then let's figure out how we accomplish them. Yes, we need to have fiscal discipline. But we cannot arbitrarily decide that some tools cannot be used from the toolbox, no matter what. Shortchanging public education may save money over the short term, but it will cost us dearly in the future.

I am a Tejana and I herald from an education family. My great-great-grandmother, Rita Alderete San Miguel, started the first public school system in Maverick County. My mom, Belle Ortiz, worked for 32 years in public education. My husband was a band director and administrator before moving into the business world. My sister, Annabelle Garcia, has taught kindergarten for more than 30 years! Who does that? She should be a candidate for sainthood.

Over the long term, cutting back on our schools cannot be sustained.

We must invest in our students.

If we invest, Donna, they can become great emergency room doctors.

If we invest, Carlos, they can become great attorneys.

If we invest, Craig, they can become great business leaders.

If we invest, David, they can become great Lieutenant Governors.

And we especially must invest in them if they've served our country by preserving the Hazlewood benefits that our veterans and their families have earned. Too many of our brave warriors fight for freedom, only to come home and then have to fight for a job. If we invest, they can take the invaluable knowledge they gained in the military and translate that to civilian success.

Let's remember that education made our nation and our state great.

This session will be difficult. We all come here with our own priorities. I've just told you mine. Some overlap with yours. Some do not.

But just like those Texans in the past, I know we can blend. Our diversity can be a strength.

That music I mentioned earlier, *conjunto*, there's a lot of ways to translate that word. It usually translates as "group." Basically it means different elements, like those German accordions and Mexican bajo sextos, coming together to form a whole.

Troy, I know we can come together and find a solution to water infrastructure issues. Robert, I know we can move forward together on transportation issues. Jane, I know we can figure out how to improve women's access to healthcare together. Dan, I know you and I have different visions for how to make education great in this state, but we do have that common goal to make it great.

We are 31 individuals here in the Senate. And we need the strength of individuals. This state was built on that spirit of rugged individualism. But we also need to remember that Texans have also come together with a spirit of neighbor helping neighbor. We recognize that we have shared responsibilities.

I am here because of the support of the people of District 26. But I could not have been here today without a supportive family with unconditional love. I was given deep roots and strong wings from my grandmother, Lupita, or "Memo."

I worked hard, but I didn't do it on my own. I was motivated to get my pharmacy degree, to be like my grandfather, Don Daniel San Miguel, who owned La Botica Guadalupana, a Mexican pharmacy in San Antonio.

I had many fine teachers who pushed me through that public education system, and taxpayers made that system possible.

Let's remember that public spirit as we do the public's business this session. Let's remember that our actions as a community can help unleash the potential of the individual.

Let's come together, from our different backgrounds and different cultures, and let's seize this opportunity. Let's meet the challenge of this moment, this crossroads in Texas history. We are Texans. We can build something great. And let's build it together.

BENEDICTION

Senator Estes offered the following benediction:

Great and amazing are Your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty. Just and true are Your ways, O King of nations. Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. All nations will come and worship You, for Your righteous acts have been revealed. (Revelation 15) We come to You, God, asking for Your wisdom and guidance during this 83rd legislative session. Mightily bless our new President Pro Tempore and her family. In fact, bless all families represented here. We have Your name prominently displayed in this Chamber, now we invite You to be present prominently in our hearts that the end result will be that the people of this great state will be blessed by our actions. Amen.

SENATE NOTIFIED

A committee from the House of Representatives appeared at the Bar of the Senate and notified the President and Members of the Senate that the House was organized and ready to transact business.

PHYSICIAN OF THE DAY

Senator Huffman was recognized and presented Dr. Troy Fiesinger of Sugar Land as the Physician of the Day.

The Senate welcomed Dr. Fiesinger and thanked him for his participation in the Physician of the Day program sponsored by the Texas Academy of Family Physicians.

VIDEO RELEASE POLICY WAIVED

On motion of Senator Eltife and by unanimous consent, the Senate policy that governs the release of recordings of the Senate proceedings was waived in order to grant the request of Senator Van de Putte for a DVD of today's session.

RESOLUTIONS OF RECOGNITION

The following resolutions were adopted by the Senate:

Welcome and Congratulatory Resolutions

SR 2 by Watson, Welcoming the participants in the Fulbright American Studies Institute for Korean Secondary School Teachers of English to Texas.

SR 3 by Watson, Recognizing the Central Texas Lions Clubs for their contributions to their communities.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Senator Whitmire, the Senate at 2:05 p.m. adjourned, in memory of Gregory Steven Spaw, son of Secretary of the Senate Patsy Spaw, until 11:00 a.m. tomorrow.