

JOURNAL
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House of Representatives
OF THE
REGULAR SESSION
OF THE
Seventy-First Legislature
OF THE
STATE OF TEXAS

BEGUN AND HELD AT
THE CITY OF AUSTIN
JANUARY 10, 1989



HR 13 - ADOPTED

The chair laid before the house the following resolution:

By Laney and Stiles:

HR 13

WHEREAS, Article III, Section 9, of the Texas Constitution requires that the house of representatives elect a speaker of the house from its own membership; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the secretary of state shall call for nominations from the floor for the election of speaker of the house of representatives for the 71st Legislature and shall recognize every member who desires to make a nomination; that each person recognized shall immediately advance to the front microphone to make his or her nomination in a nominating speech not to exceed five minutes in length; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That after all nominations have been made, nominations shall be closed; whereupon seconding speeches shall be allowed, one for each nomination, in the order in which the nominations were made; and then other seconding speeches shall be allowed in rotation, with speeches in each round made in the order in which the nominations were made; provided that each nominee shall be allowed a maximum of five seconding speeches, none to exceed two minutes in length, and no person shall be considered a nominee unless his or her nomination is seconded by at least one member; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That all votes taken for election of speaker shall be record votes and entered in the House Journal; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the secretary of state shall announce the results of the election; and if one nominee has received a majority of the votes cast, the secretary of state shall declare him or her to be elected to the office of speaker of the house of representatives; but if no nominee has received such a majority, the two nominees receiving the largest number of votes in the first ballot shall be in a runoff election and the procedure shall be repeated a second time with votes being cast for one or the other of the two nominees, the member receiving the higher vote being declared elected; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That after the election, the oath of office shall be administered under the direction of the secretary of state to the speaker-elect and the speaker shall thereupon take the chair.

The resolution was adopted without objection.

ELECTION OF THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The secretary of state announced that the next order of business was the election of the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the 71st Legislature of the State of Texas, and stated that nominations for speaker are now in order.

The secretary of state recognized the Honorable Stan Schlueter of Bell County who placed in nomination for Speaker of the House of Representatives of the 71st Legislature of the State of Texas, the Honorable Gibson D. Lewis of Tarrant County, speaking as follows:

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Governor Clements, Speaker Wright, honored members of the judiciary, members of Congress who are here for redistricting, and many other honored guests and families.

First let me say to the new members "Welcome again to Austin. Welcome to the legislature." You have passed your first two most difficult tests. As you noticed, the first thing we taught you was the alphabet and then we counted to one hundred and fifty. The other tests will not be quite that simple. You and your families have made great sacrifices to get here. The sacrifices are even greater if you stay and they will be recognized by very few beyond those now in this room. I commend you for your desire to serve your state. The fun is over, it's time to go to work. Keep your heads down, your powder dry, and never say never.

Today we are here to witness democracy in action. Democracy, as you know, is the process by which people are free to choose the person who will get the blame. We're here to elect our leader.

Many outstanding men have presided over this house since Texas was admitted to statehood. One went on to become Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, others served later as eminent United States senators, judges, attorneys general, railroad commissioners, lieutenant governors, and governors of Texas.

The speaker of the house is the most important position in state government where a person's colleagues, rather than the electorate, make the choice. We select, from among our 150 members, the person we want to lead us. It's a political office, ranking among the top three political offices in Texas, yet it is far more than that. Our leader personifies this legislative body which by tradition and, in fact, remains closest to the people and responds most quickly to their will.

The speaker must deal with many varied personalities in this chamber. We come here from both political parties and represent differing philosophies even within those parties. We are black, brown, white, female, male, liberal, conservative, urban, rural, laid back, confrontational.

Our speaker has to deal with all of us. It's to his credit that he takes us as we are, and somehow manages to impose order and discipline without fomenting a rebellion.

Gib Lewis understands the political system in which all of us are willing participants. He is an adept practitioner of statecraft. He knows the legislative process. He understands the members of the house and knows how to fit the round pegs into the round holes to make this legislative process work.

Gib Lewis first took the gavel in 1983. We handed it to him again in 1985 and 1987. These have not been easy sessions for him or for any of us. We've watched our state descend from the heights of an economic boom to the depths of a recession. We've had to cope with taxes, school reforms, and other fights too numerous to mention.

The last four years have been extremely difficult. For the first time in our history our destiny was being controlled by interests outside our sphere of influence: the federal courts and, in the Middle East, OPEC.

First: The prison suit—estimated costs in the billions from the far reaches of Texas came the cry, "Hang the judge." Don't build Hilton hotels for them.

Second: The MHMR suits—the east Texas boys had bought the rope and the west Texas boys had found the tree; a hangin' was the only way out.

Lastly—as if enough financial setbacks had not occurred the oil market became glutted and the price of oil plummeted. Texas went into a depression, and a word totally alien to our vocabulary became a part of our everyday discussions.....TAXES!!!!

Through it all, Gib has been an island of calm in a sea of conflict and political infighting.

Gib Lewis has been a successful speaker because he is fundamentally a fair man, a patient man, a straight shooter. He believes in the committee process and his door is always open. Those are qualities all of us would like to think we have, but in this man we see them on display every day, both in the public spotlight and the internal workings of this legislature.

Gib Lewis has earned another term as speaker of the house.

He should continue as our spokesman in the high councils of state government. We need his experience and ability. We need his positive attitude, his optimism and his sincerity. With this captain at the helm, all of us are better sailors.

So I believe I speak for you as well as for myself when I place his name for nomination for re-election.

It is my high honor to nominate a great Texan to be Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives: the Honorable Gib Lewis of Fort Worth.

The secretary of state then recognized the Honorable Larry Evans, who seconded the nomination of the Honorable Gibson D. Lewis, speaking as follows:

Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Governor Clements, members of the national Congress, members of the judiciary, fellow members, fellow Texans:

I come before you today to second the nomination of Gibson D. "Gib" Lewis as Speaker of the 71st session of the Texas Legislature. When I first met Gib Lewis in 1982, we visited and he asked if I would support him for Speaker. I asked him what would be required of me if I so gave my support. He told me the only thing that would be required of me was to adequately represent my district. I can say after three terms of working with Gib as Speaker that he is indeed a man of his word and that this is all he has ever asked of me or of any member.

The qualities that we look for in a Speaker are those qualities that Gib possesses. He strives for unity in the membership. He seeks for fairness to treat fairly. He is the kind of man who can be trusted; if he makes a promise to you, he won't go back on it; it won't be broken. He seeks to minimize controversy and see that we as members get along well and we do produce and are efficient in terms of the passage of legislation. And he has a proven track record. He's a quality leader. That leadership has been shown time and time again. First in 1983 and then in 1985 and 1987. I am fully confident that if you see fit to re-elect him as Speaker for the 71st session, he will again show that proven leadership.

The decade of the 80's has not been an easy one for us here in Texas. We've been faced with many trials and tribulations. This session will be no less difficult. This is not time for mediocrity. This is time to continue on the same high road that Gib has set for us over the past three terms.

For that reason, I, without any hesitation or reservation, move to second the nomination of Gibson D. "Gib" Lewis as Speaker of the 71st session of the Texas Legislature.

The secretary of state then asked if there were further nominations for the office of Speaker of the House of Representatives of the 71st Legislature.

There being none, the secretary of state then recognized the Honorable Patricia Hill, who seconded the nomination of the Honorable Gibson D. Lewis, speaking as follows:

Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Governor Clements, members of the judiciary, fellow members and guests. It is my honor to second the nomination of Gib Lewis as Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives.

In a manner of speaking, Gib and I were freshmen together. In 1983, when I began my freshman term as a member of this House, Gib began his freshman term as Speaker. It has been an interesting six years. During that time, I have watched Gib preside over this motley, rambunctious, and occasionally partisan group. He has presided over taxing battles, spending battles, education battles and a number of other battles that should, by rights, have turned his hair grey or brought him to tears. Neither of these, as far as I can tell, has happened to Gib.

Gib has evidenced over and over the characteristics so essential to his office. Several of them deserve special mention.

First, Gib is even-handed. I guess this is another way of saying that Gib is fair. The office of speaker is a powerful one. The speaker, if he wished, could impose a far heavier hand over our activities than he does. Our deliberations might be quicker and they might be neater, but they would not be more democratic. Gib prefers to leave the resolution of issues to the will of the House. All of us, as members, have an opportunity to participate in influencing that will. When a trial is over, we may not feel we have won our cases, but we will certainly have had our day in court.

Second, Gib has common sense. Common sense is not a common quality. You might say common sense is genius dressed in work clothes—or, in Gib's case, in hunting clothes. Gib's common sense enables him to understand both the nature of problems and the possibilities for their solution. This ability has enabled him to profoundly influence state policy on many occasions. One of these deserves special mention. During the special session on education which was held in the summer of 1984, Gib saw the need for doing more for our public education system than just raising teachers' salaries. He also saw the possibility of implementing the significant reforms that became House Bill 72. Passage of this bill remains one of his and our finest achievements.

Finally, Gib is even-tempered. Sometimes I see the House as a family with 149 fractious, egotistical, demanding children, and Gib as our ever-patient parent. He is accessible to each of us. He returns our telephone calls and actually seems to enjoy our visits, even though we're often seeking favors or making suggestions that will make his life harder, not easier. He listens to his members and he takes their words to heart. Gib has the gift of a pleasant, soothing disposition that can bring all together and see the humor in a situation. Of all his wonderful qualities, I sometimes think that Gib's disposition may be his greatest gift.

Sometimes I wonder about the sense of timing that Speaker Lewis and I have evidenced. In 1983, when we were freshmen together, the legislature had to deal with a deficit, rather than a surplus, for the first time in recent history. The situation has deteriorated since then. Texas is in the throes of a severe economic downturn which is evidenced, in part, by a rash of closings of banks and savings and loan institutions.

This session, like the others over which our Speaker has presided, will be difficult. Now, more than ever, our Speaker's common sense, fairness, and even

temper will be needed to forge this amalgamation of representatives into a creative, productive, perhaps even civil, body. It is therefore my honor to second the nomination of Gib Lewis as Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives.

The secretary of state then recognized the Honorable Juan Hinojosa, who seconded the nomination of the Honorable Gibson D. Lewis, speaking as follows:

I rise to second the nomination of Gibson Lewis, state representative from District 89, as the Speaker of the House of Representatives for the 71st Legislative Session. I have served four sessions with Representative Lewis, three of those as speaker of this great institution, the Texas House of Representatives.

During these terms that Representative Lewis served as speaker, he has provided leadership and has led us through some of the most difficult economic times our state has experienced, the peso devaluations, the plunge in the price of oil and gas, and a freeze that nearly wiped out our agriculture economy. We have also tackled some of the most pressing socio-economic problems that have been ignored in the past.

At the time that our state loses its oil and gas economic base—the bread and butter of our economy—Representative Lewis as speaker has charted a new direction to ensure the vitality of our state's economy for future generations.

Through his leadership, we have begun to diversify our economy and invest in those ingredients that make up economic development: education, highways, health, water development and technical skills for our labor force. This will guarantee a better quality of life for all Texans.

At the same time, we have taken steps to deal with indigent health care, public education, improvements for farmworkers, and protection of women and children, to name a few of our most pressing socio-economic problems.

During this period of time, Representative Lewis has performed with dignity under pressure. He was not afraid to make the hard choices. The house has become a more open forum for debate of public issues. Representative Lewis supported the Open Meetings Act and has pushed for more open government to provide for public accountability.

But none of this could have been accomplished were it not for Representative Lewis' approach to the job of speaker. He is fair and accessible to all members. He believes in full and equal participation by each legislator so that we all can represent our constituents. But the best reason that I can give you for voting for Representative Lewis as Speaker of the House is that he is fair and he is one of us.

The secretary of state then recognized the Honorable Ashley Smith, who seconded the nomination of the Honorable Gibson D. Lewis, speaking as follows:

Mr. Secretary, Governor Clements and Mrs. Clements, members, honored guests:

It is my pleasure to second the nomination.

The nominee for speaker, when asked if he would run for governor, was quoted to say, "Why would I give up the best job in Texas?"

Gib Lewis' commitment to the Texas House of Representatives and to the office of speaker is evidenced by his unprecedented fourth term.

There is an old saying in Texas that success is where preparedness meets opportunity. Gib's service to the house extends over 18 years. But his preparedness comes from a vastly broader experience than the legislature. As the founder and CEO of a successful label company, he has the business instincts and insights that foster good decisions in the state budget process.

As a world class hunter, he has developed the patience, discipline, and instincts to know when it's a trophy worth the hunt and when it's not. The legislative process requires the same patience, discipline, and instincts to recognize the trophies and

the effort that is necessary. The crime package, educational reform, the Texas Department of Commerce, and tort reform are all in the record books.

Self-discipline is a part of the office of speaker that is essential. A man who will meet you at 6 a.m. every morning before the beginning of a full legislative day, to run or to row, is a man of discipline.

There's a plaque which hangs in the office of the speaker that quotes a man of similar values—Theodore Roosevelt. It says, "It's not the critic that counts; the credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena."

Gib Lewis is the man in Theodore Roosevelt's arena who valiantly tries to do the deed, who knows the great enthusiasm, and who spends himself in a worthy cause for Texas.

It is my distinct honor and pleasure to second the nomination of Gibson D. Lewis for Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives.

The secretary of state then recognized the Honorable Mark Stiles, who seconded the nomination of the Honorable Gibson D. Lewis, speaking as follows:

Mr. Secretary, fellow members, and distinguished guests, I stand before you honored to second the nomination of the Honorable Gibson D. Lewis for Speaker of the House; but also to remind you of our pledge to the constituents in our respective districts and to this great state. We have merely borrowed these seats we occupy this morning from those individuals who have entrusted us with their futures. And, let us not forget how quickly they can be taken from us if our actions are not in accordance with their demands. We are here because of the people, people with concerns for their families, their communities and their state.

These are critical times for our state. We no longer compete with just the states of this nation, but also with the world's super powers.

Because of our prominent position in the world market, we must be cognizant of not only what we want for Texas today, but also the future we want for generations to come. We must build on our past experiences and better prepare ourselves and this state for what lies ahead.

We have been elected to be leaders. Now, each of us has the choice of whether to act as one. The critical conditions facing the legislature have not been created overnight and they will not be solved overnight.

Keeping this in mind, today we come together to elect the leader of this legislative body. With a unified selection of Gib Lewis to a fourth term as speaker we will be demonstrating to the state, to the country, that as Texans we can stand together. An overwhelming victory for Gib will start this Seventy-First Session with a can-do attitude, ready to get behind a true leader to do business the way Texans want it done.

Today, it makes no difference if you are Republican or Democrat, male or female, black, brown, white, Christian, Jewish or without religious affiliation. We all have the opportunity to support a tough, fair, and compassionate man. One who has never replaced the demands and needs of his district for those of his own desires. Instead, Gib Lewis has taken his dedication to his own district and extended it to the entire state. He realizes his position in the legislature, as speaker, is an honor bestowed upon him by you.

In the past, Gib has advanced this body toward decisions ensuring better education, more human services, and greater economic development for the future of Texas. He has united this legislative forum on issues thought virtually impossible by many. And, under the leadership of this great Texan we have made unmatched strides toward a brighter tomorrow.

As we nominate our Speaker today, united, we can lead this state, united.

Let us make a pact, each of us, over the next one hundred and forty days behind Gib Lewis, we will present our facts, argue, discuss, and fight for what we believe in; but, above all else, we will place the people of Texas first.

Representative Stiles moved that nominations cease, and that the Honorable Gibson D. Lewis of Tarrant County be elected Speaker of the House of Representatives of the 71st Legislature of the State of Texas.

A record vote was requested.

Representative Gibson D. "Gib" Lewis was elected Speaker of the House of Representatives of the 71st Legislature of the State of Texas by (Record 1): 149 Yeas, 0 Nays, 1 Present, not voting.

Yeas — Alexander; Arnold; Barton; Beauchamp; Berlanga; Betts; Blackwood; Blair; Brimer; Cain; Campbell; Carter; Cavazos; Chisum; Clemons; Colbert; Collazo; Conley; Connelly; Counts; Craddick; Crawford; Criss; Cuellar, H.; Cuellar, R.; Culberson; Danburg; Delco; Denton; Dutton; Earley; Eckels; Edge; Edwards; Evans; Finnell; Fraser; Garcia; Gavin; Gibson; Glossbrenner; Goolsby; Granoff; Grusendorf; Guerrero; Haggerty; Hammond; Harris, C.; Harris, J.; Harrison; Heflin; Hightower; Hilbert; Hilderbran; Hill, A.; Hill, F.; Hill, P.; Hinojosa; Hollowell; Holzheuser; Horn; Hudson, D.; Hudson, S.; Hunter, B.; Hunter, T.; Hury; Jackson; Johnson, J.; Johnson, S.; Jones; Junell; Kubiak; Kuempel; Laney; Larry; Lewis; Linebarger; Lucio; Luna, A.; Luna, G.; Madla; Marchant; Martinez; McCollough; McDonald; McKinney; McWilliams; Melton; Morales; Moreno, A.; Moreno, P.; Mowery; Oakley; Ovard; Park; Parker; Patronella; Patterson; Pennington; Perez; Perry; Pierce; Polumbo; Price; Rangel; Repp; Richardson; Robinson; Robnett; Rodriguez; Rudd; Russell; Saunders; Schlueter; Schoolcraft; Seidlits; Shea; Shelley; Shine; Smith, A.; Smith, D.; Smith, R.; Smith, T.; Smithee; Soileau; Stiles; Swift; Tallas; Taylor; Telford; Thomas; Thompson, G.; Thompson, S.; Turner; Uher; Valigura; Vowell; Wallace; Warner; Waterfield; Watkins; Wentworth; Williamson; Willis; Willy; Wilson; Wolens; Wright; Yost.

Present, not voting — Mr. Speaker.

The Honorable Jack Rains, Secretary of State of the State of Texas, then declared the Honorable Gibson D. Lewis of Tarrant County to be the duly elected Speaker of the House of Representatives of the 71st Legislature of the State of Texas.

COMMITTEE APPOINTED

The secretary of state announced the appointment of the following committee to escort the Honorable Gibson D. Lewis to the speaker's rostrum for the purpose of taking the constitutional oath of office as speaker: Representatives Berlanga, chair, Cain, Carter, Criss, R. Cuellar, Dutton, Grusendorf, J. Harris, B. Hunter, Patterson, Pierce, and Rudd.

Speaker-elect Lewis and his party were escorted to the speaker's rostrum.

OATH OF OFFICE TAKEN BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

The Honorable Gibson D. Lewis of Tarrant County, having been escorted to the speaker's rostrum, took the constitutional oath of office as Speaker of the House of Representatives of the 71st Legislature of the State of Texas, which was administered by the Honorable Joe Spurlock II, Justice, Second District Court of Appeals of Texas.

INTRODUCTION OF PLATFORM GUESTS

Secretary of State Jack Rains recognized the Honorable Lloyd Criss who introduced Sandra Lewis, the speaker's wife, Marie Croft, the speaker's mother, Jack Lewis, the speaker's father, Cammie and Cole Morvan, the speaker's daughter

and son-in-law, MacKenzie Morvan, the speaker's granddaughter, Cathy Baker, the speaker's daughter, Megan and Drue Baker, the speaker's granddaughters, the Honorable William P. Clements, Governor of the State of Texas, Rita Clements, First Lady of Texas, the Honorable Jim Wright, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and other distinguished guests.

Representative Criss then recognized Representative Jim Rudd.

ADDRESS BY SPEAKER LEWIS

Representative Jim Rudd then introduced Speaker Lewis who addressed the house, speaking as follows:

Speaker Wright, Governor Clements, fellow members, Justice Spurlock, distinguished friends and honored guests. The office and responsibility you have bestowed upon me today fills me with a deep sense of humility and responsibility.

I thank you for the honor of serving as your speaker for another term. I also thank you for your confidence, your support, and your friendship.

In 1983 when I was first elected speaker, I pledged to you an administration dedicated to "honesty, fairness, and openness." I have kept my pledge to you, and restate my commitment today to be a member's speaker.

Each of you is invited, and urged, to become a vital part of the legislative process. Rest assured that House proceedings will be fair. Assignments will be made in the best interests of the House and the State of Texas.

A new legislative session begins this afternoon. As I look out at the new members here today, I am reminded of the day eighteen years ago when I first took the oath of office. While it is an exciting time for all of us, it is also a time for a frank review of the state of our state.

Just over one hundred years ago, sixty thousand Texans gathered on this hillside to celebrate the opening of the new Texas Capitol. For a poor state, just a few decades removed from the brawling frontier, it was, and remains, a magnificent structure, a symbol of determination, courage, and the will to survive and succeed. Sam Houston's youngest son, State Senator Temple Houston, said in dedicating this building, "It stands as a sentinel of eternity to gaze upon passing ages."

In 1889 our population was only two million. Most Texans of that era were farmers and ranchers spread far across the land. Our present constitution was barely twelve years old. Texans then, as today, agreed with President Thomas Jefferson, who said, "That government governs best which governs least."

But even then as the 21st Legislature gathered, our state was moving to meet the challenges of an urban, industrial future.

Indeed, since the first days of statehood, our legislators have worked to limit government involvement while advancing human values, and fostering economic growth.

In 1845, we started to develop a statewide railroad system.

In 1879, we created the Texas Department of Health, which today immunizes over 600,000 Texans a year.

In 1883, we established the University of Texas, which would become, along with A&M and other universities in Texas, truly world class institutions.

In 1917, we created the State Highway Department. Today, we have the finest network of roads in the world.

In 1935, we established the Department of Public Safety, to enforce the laws and protect a growing population from crime.

These were foundations, laid at a time when Texas was poor but when opportunity was boundless. These were investments, some in building and transportation, but above all and most durably, investments in our people. These were the seeds from which fields of prosperity and happiness could grow. And grow

they did, until by 1980 our state was, by itself, the 12th largest producing entity in the world.

Now let us consider the more recent past. We have been through difficult times. Collapsing oil prices deeply damaged and crippled an industry on which much of our fortune had been built. The national recession in 1981 and 1982, and an overvalued dollar through 1985, hurt our manufacturing and advanced-technology exporting sectors. High interest rates and past overbuilding hurt our construction trades. The crisis in Mexico hurt our foreign trade. Jobs were lost, and Texas no longer seemed quite the place it once had been.

Five years ago we began to develop a new strategy, a blueprint for a new Texas. In 1984 a new era in Texas history began.

In 1984, we began the battle against mediocrity in our public education system. House Bill 72, a model for excellence in education, is a landmark for Texas and the nation.

In 1985, the legislature enacted and voters approved a comprehensive water plan. Our actions helped to guarantee that clean water would be available in abundance for personal, recreational, and industrial use well into the twenty-first century.

In 1987, we faced an economic crisis in our state. Our government confronted the largest budget shortfall in history. One choice was to retreat from our hopes, our commitments, and our dreams. The other was to search, through hard work and sacrifice, for a new way forward. We met that challenge.

That year the legislature committed itself to a new diversity in our economy. We created the Texas Department of Commerce, which in less than two years helped attract several major new companies to our state, while contributing to the creation of over 200,000 jobs for Texans. And this is only the beginning.

Just a few weeks ago, there was another milestone: Texas won the competition for the supercollider. With this project, we will become the leading world center for high-energy physics, a crown jewel in our growing scientific and educational estate.

One hundred years ago, the 21st Legislature faced the transition from agriculture to industry. Today, we face a new, and more complex transition: from oil and heavy industry toward a new, diversified economy, based on manufacturing, science, engineering, education, medicine and services.

The future of Texas can be seen in December's newspapers, in reports that a small group of our own students, here in Austin, have developed a device that could end acid rain. The future can be seen at MCC, and at Sematech. It can be seen at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, where three Nobel Prize winners labor on the frontiers of medical research. The future of Texas can also be seen in Bobby Ray Peck, a Rhodes Scholar, from my hometown of Fort Worth.

My fellow citizens, we, the members of the Texas House of Representatives, are committed. We are committed to a vision. We are committed to a course of action. We are committed to build, and to rebuild, Texas.

We are committed to build on the foundation we have already created, and to nurture our vision until we have transformed Texas into a diversified, growing, and once again prosperous land of boundless opportunity and unlimited potential.

Circumstances, as always, remain difficult. Yes, there is much to do. But let us begin today.

Members, we must have the wisdom to continue pursuing excellence in our public schools. It is our task to see that every Texas child receives the care, the education, and the skills needed for success. We must recognize that the future of our state depends on the achievements of our school children.

Our universities are reaching the front rank in the nation. We must have the vision to keep moving forward with new programs, better libraries, and the means to attract a faculty second to none.

Our state workers' compensation process fails to meet the needs of injured workers, as it discourages business development. We must design a better system.

Our tax structure is outdated. It is far too vulnerable to the economic cycles of the energy industry. We must begin to develop a fair and balanced tax structure, suitable to the economy we are building for our state.

We need more prisons.

We need treatment and prevention programs to advance the war on drugs. We cannot ignore the needs of the homeless and jobless.

And it is our challenge to ensure that every Texan, rural or urban, rich or poor, has access to the best health care possible.

Let us accelerate our battle against cancer.

Let us give new emphasis to our fight against AIDS. Indeed, we must support adequate care for victims of this disease. We must join the battle with a commitment to the prevention and ultimate cure of AIDS. This is a moral obligation we cannot avoid and must not foresake.

Finally, let us consider those steps that will provide our citizens with a judicial and a legislative process of integrity, competence and stability.

And let us ensure that our government always remains open.

For many years Texas meant opportunity. Today, many no longer believe in the promise and potential of Texas. It is a time, therefore, for us to show that we believe in ourselves.

We must develop an atmosphere, a climate, a spirit of progress and opportunity for all people. We must diversify, develop new ideas, technologies, and above all, social progress. When we do that, others will believe in us once again.

The key to it all, whether in education or health care, the environment, new business development or support for research, is to invest in our greatest natural resource which is human capital: our citizens, the great people of the State of Texas.

Members, the people of Texas are an investment. People are the shareholders and partners in our vision of a better state. They cannot be trimmed, cut back, or denied their rights and opportunities without consequences. If we desert our people, we turn our backs on the future of Texas.

Members of the House and my fellow citizens, this year we face a choice. We can call retreat, trim our sails, cut back our vision, and display the face of self-doubt to the rest of the nation and the world. Or we can continue along our steady path, the prudent, measured, confident and continuing path of investment in ourselves, our people, and our future. Your challenge, our challenge, is to continue building on new foundations in education, commerce, the environment, research and health care.

In the poem, "The Road Not Taken," Robert Frost wrote, and I quote, "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I — I took the one less traveled by. — And that has made all the difference."

One hundred years ago, Texans had only their determination, their confidence and their faith in God. That is all we have today. So let us utilize the strengths of our people to ensure a future of progress and opportunity for all Texans, especially children who bring joy to our lives and who will ultimately benefit from our actions.

I challenge you to join me and take the road less traveled. Join me as we lead the land we love.

Members, let us unite, as one, to forge ahead in confronting the challenges of a new Texas.