

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

BEGUN AND HELD AT
THE CITY OF AUSTIN
JANUARY 8, 1991



HR 20 - ADOPTED

The chair laid before the house the following resolution:

By Stiles and Hightower:

HR 20

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 72nd 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 three 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 read.

Representative Price offered the following amendment to the resolution:

Amend **HR 20** by striking the third and fourth resolving clauses and substituting the following:

RESOLVED, that the speaker shall be elected by secret ballot, and that for that purpose the clerk shall distribute blank pieces of paper to each member, on which the member shall write the name of the person for whom the member wishes to vote, who need not have been nominated if there is but a single nominee; the clerk shall call the roll and each member shall as he or she is called bring the ballot to the clerk's desk and place the ballot in a container; the secretary of state shall appoint tellers from among the membership of the house to count the votes; a person is elected only if the person receives a favorable vote of a majority of the membership of the house; if no person receives a majority on the first ballot, subsequent nominations shall be made and ballots taken until a person receives that majority vote; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the secretary of state shall declare the results of each

ballot taken until a person is elected as speaker, and be it further

Representative Stiles moved to table the Price amendment.

A record vote was requested.

The motion to table prevailed by (Record 1): 142 Yeas, 6 Nays, 1 Present, not voting.

Yeas — Alexander; Arnold; Bailey; Barton; Berlanga; Black; Blackwood; Blair; Bomer; Bosse; Brady; Brimer; Cain; Campbell; Carona; Carter; Cate; Cavazos; Chisum; Clemons; Colbert; Collazo; Conley; Connelly; Cook; Counts; Craddick; Crawford; Cuellar, H.; Cuellar, R.; Culberson; Danburg; De La Garza; Delco; Delisi; Denton; Dutton; Earley; Eckels; Edwards; Finnell; Fleuriet; Fraser; Gallego; Gallegos; Gibson; Glaze; Glossbrenner; Goodman; Goolsby; Granoff; Grusendorf; Gutierrez; Haggerty; Hartnett; Harris; Heflin; Hernandez; Hightower; Hilbert; Hilderbran; Hill, A.; Hill, F.; Hirschi; Holzheuser; Horn; Hudson; Hunter, B.; Hunter, T.; Hury; Jackson; Johnson, J.; Johnson, S.; Jones; Junell; Kubiak; Kuempel; Laney; Larry; Lewis, R.; Linebarger; Luna; Madla; Marchant; Martin; Martinez; McCollough; McDonald; Mowery; Oakley; Ogden; Oliveira; Ovard; Park; Parker; Patterson; Pennington; Perez; Pierce; Place; Puente; Rabuck; Rangel; Repp; Robnett; Rodriguez; Rudd; Russell; Sadler; Saunders; Schechter; Schoolcraft; Seidlits; Shea; Shelley; Smith, A.; Smith, D.; Smithee; Soileau; Stiles; Swinford; Tallas; Taylor; Telford; Thomas; Thompson, G.; Thompson, S.; Turner; Uher; Van de Putte; Von Dohlen; Vowell; Wallace; Watkins; Wentworth; Williamson; Willis; Willy; Wilson; Wolens; Yarbrough; Yost.

Nays — Evans; Greenberg; Kamel; Moreno; Naishtat; Price.

Present, not voting — Mr. Speaker(C).

Representative Moreno offered the following amendment to the resolution:

Amend **HR 20** as follows:

Insert a new paragraph immediately after the paragraphs providing for nominations, to read as follows:

RESOLVED, That the person who is elected as speaker of the house for the 72nd Legislature will not be eligible for election as speaker for more than one following consecutive term, and by election as speaker the person agrees to abide by that limitation; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That it is the intent of the House that in future speaker elections, an incumbent speaker who has previously been elected as speaker of the house two or more consecutive times will not be eligible for election as speaker.

Representative Hightower moved to table the Moreno amendment.

A record vote was requested.

The motion to table prevailed by (Record 2): 140 Yeas, 8 Nays, 1 Present, not voting.

Yeas — Alexander; Arnold; Bailey; Barton; Berlanga; Black; Blackwood; Blair; Bomer; Bosse; Brady; Brimer; Cain; Campbell; Carona; Carter; Cate;

Cavazos; Chisum; Clemons; Colbert; Collazo; Conley; Connelly; Cook; Counts; Craddick; Crawford; Cuellar, H.; Cuellar, R.; Culberson; Danburg; De La Garza; Delco; Delisi; Denton; Dutton; Earley; Eckels; Edwards; Finnell; Fleuriot; Fraser; Gallego; Gallegos; Gibson; Glaze; Glossbrenner; Goodman; Goolsby; Granoff; Greenberg; Grusendorf; Gutierrez; Haggerty; Hartnett; Harris; Heflin; Hernandez; Hightower; Hilbert; Hilderbran; Hill, A.; Hill, F.; Hirschi; Holzhauser; Horn; Hudson; Hunter, B.; Hunter, T.; Hury; Jackson; Johnson, J.; Johnson, S.; Jones; Junell; Kamel; Kubiak; Kuempel; Laney; Larry; Lewis, R.; Linebarger; Luna; Madla; Marchant; Martin; Martinez; McCollough; McDonald; Mowery; Naishtat; Oakley; Oliveira; Ovard; Park; Parker; Patterson; Pennington; Perez; Pierce; Place; Puente; Repp; Robnett; Rodriguez; Rudd; Russell; Sadler; Saunders; Schoolcraft; Seidlits; Shea; Shelley; Smith, A.; Smith, D.; Smithee; Soileau; Stiles; Swinford; Tallas; Taylor; Telford; Thomas; Thompson, G.; Thompson, S.; Turner; Uher; Van de Putte; Von Dohlen; Vowell; Wallace; Watkins; Wentworth; Williamson; Willy; Wilson; Wolens; Yarbrough; Yost.

Nays — Evans; Moreno; Ogden; Price; Rabuck; Rangel; Schechter; Willis.

Present, not voting — Mr. Speaker(C).

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 72nd Legislature of the State of Texas, and stated that nominations for speaker are now in order.

The secretary of state recognized the Honorable Bruce Gibson of Johnson County, who placed in nomination for Speaker of the House of Representatives of the 72nd Legislature of the State of Texas the Honorable Gibson D. Lewis of Tarrant County, speaking as follows:

Mr. Secretary, Honored Guests, Fellow Members of the House, I rise to place in nomination for speaker of the house the Honorable Gibson Lewis.

Today we make history. No speaker has been elected to five terms. This era places Gib Lewis as one of Texas' great practitioners of statecraft. Statecraft is harder than politics. Politics is the art of getting along with people. Statecraft is the art of getting along with politicians. No greater proof of this judgment can be found than in the unprecedented breadth of support the speaker enjoys in this house. It cuts across every boundary of philosophy, party, race, or gender. Some ask why. Gib Lewis has done a good job, he has been honest and fair, and with the problems that we have to face—we need him now.

Texas is changing faster than we are. Just think! This session we must choose a new way to pay for our neighborhood schools. We must choose between our colleagues' legislative districts and decide who may stay. We must choose whether some Texans will receive less from the state and whether some Texans will pay more. In these difficult times, Texas needs continuity. But we have new leadership in the senate and new leadership in the Governor's

Mansion. The house of representatives needs leadership that is proven and tested. Gib Lewis is that leader.

For eight years Gib Lewis has been known as the "member's speaker." For our new colleagues let me explain that description. The power of the gavel is immense. It can be used to force the wants of the special interest. It can be used to intimidate the minority. It can be used to promote a speaker into a governor. But this speaker has never wielded the power of the gavel with an iron fist. He genuinely puts the needs of each member first. He believes deeply in letting the house work its will unfettered. He works diligently to create an atmosphere where consensus can develop. And he has never compromised this house for his own political gain. But the power of the gavel has been struck. It struck hard for **HB 72** and our school children. It struck hard for tort reform. It struck hard for indigent health care. It struck hard for workers' compensation. It will continue to strike hard when the needs are great and minds are small.

During difficult times, we often focus on what is wrong and fail to emphasize what is right. A man is judged to be great because of the positive qualities he possesses, not because of the absence of faults. Those qualities of leadership which our speaker possesses—commitment, a strong sense of fair play, an instinct for bringing people together—have served this house well for eight years. And it's those same qualities of leadership that drives our speaker forward today when he knows his cause is true.

Members, many times in this house, before a big vote, when the issue was tough, the margin was close, when members were confused and apprehensive—with the voting bell ringing—our speaker would step forward saying, "Show the chair voting aye." And the board turned green.

Today, Mr. Speaker, as you are reelected by the 72nd Legislature to an historic fifth term, "Show the house voting aye."

The secretary of state then asked if there were further nominations for the office of Speaker of the House of Representatives of the 72nd Legislature.

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

Mr. Secretary, fellow members of the legislature, and honored guests:

I am privileged to second the nomination of the Honorable Gibson D. Lewis for reelection as the Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives.

As part of the 72nd Legislature, we house members face an interesting session ahead. Some say the task of serving the state and its people is a monumental one.

Today we begin the process by electing Gib Lewis, a man of leadership and determination to be our speaker.

Winston Churchill said that "Democracy is the worst form of government—except all those other forms that have been tried." It's our ability to exercise that rarest of freedoms—to choose our own leaders—that elevates this nation above many others in the world.

"The true democracy, living and growing and inspiring, puts its faith in the people," President Kennedy said. Well today, we are the people with

whom that faith is entrusted. Today, we have the privilege and the responsibility to elect our leader.

I mention the word responsibility because after we vote for a speaker, our commitment to making this government work has only begun. This commitment is also needed of each of us who ever casts a vote in the ballot box. Our participation in democracy has just started. As I always say, apathy will get you everything you don't want. For democracy to flourish, our active participation is needed in good times and bad.

As we look at our state economy and the needs of our citizens, I'm reminded of another Churchill observation that "this is one of those cases in which the imagination is baffled by the facts."

Sam Rayburn, the great man whose name is synonymous with the term speaker, once wrote of the challenges to leadership when his Congress faced a troubled economy and threats of war. "The old days of pounding on the desk and giving people hell are gone," Rayburn wrote. "We've all grown up now. A man's got to lead by persuasion and kindness and the best reason—that's the only way he can lead the people." Sam Rayburn's words ring so true today.

Gib Lewis has done much to bring us together during his four terms as speaker. Indeed, he is a man of rare loyalty and character. It's said that a speaker's greatest tools are patience, reason, and compromise. All of these, Gib Lewis exercises in abundance.

I know you will join me in electing Gib Lewis as Speaker of the Texas House.

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

Mr. Secretary, and members of the 72nd Legislature:

These are the best of times and the worst of times. We have some difficult days ahead. A budget shortfall, school finance, redistricting, and monumental human service needs are just a few of the problems that we are facing. Therefore we need someone who has the experience and the ability to lead us through this difficult period. I am honored and privileged to second the nomination of such a person. I second the nomination of the Honorable Gibson D. Lewis, of Tarrant County, for an unprecedented, history-making, fifth term as Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives.

The secretary of state then recognized the Honorable Eddie Cavazos, who seconded the nomination of the Honorable Gibson D. Lewis. (Text of speech not available.)

The Honorable Eddie Cavazos moved that the Honorable Gibson D. Lewis be elected Speaker of the House of Representatives of the 72nd Legislature of the State of Texas.

A record vote was requested.

The motion prevailed by (Record 3): 146 Yeas, 1 Nay, 2 Present, not voting.

Yeas — Alexander; Arnold; Bailey; Barton; Berlanga; Black; Blackwood; Blair; Bomer; Bosse; Brady; Brimer; Cain; Campbell; Carona; Carter; Cate; Cavazos; Chisum; Clemons; Colbert; Collazo; Conley; Connelly; Cook; Counts; Craddick; Crawford; Cuellar, H.; Cuellar, R.; Culberson; Danburg; De La Garza; Delco; Delisi; Denton; Dutton; Earley; Eckels; Edwards; Evans; Finnell; Fleuriet; Fraser; Gallego; Gallegos; Gibson; Glaze; Glossbrenner; Goodman; Goolsby; Granoff; Greenberg; Grusendorf; Gutierrez; Haggerty; Hartnett; Harris; Heflin; Hernandez; Hightower; Hilbert; Hilderbran; Hill, A.; Hill, F.; Hirschi; Holzheuser; Horn; Hudson; Hunter, B.; Hunter, T.; Hury; Jackson; Johnson, J.; Johnson, S.; Jones; Junell; Kubiak; Kuempel; Laney; Larry; Lewis, R.; Linebarger; Luna; Madla; Marchant; Martin; Martinez; McCollough; McDonald; Mowery; Naishtat; Oakley; Ogden; Oliveira; Ovard; Park; Parker; Patterson; Pennington; Perez; Pierce; Place; Price; Puente; Rabuck; Rangel; Repp; Robnett; Rodriguez; Rudd; Russell; Sadler; Saunders; Schechter; Schoolcraft; Seidlits; Shea; Shelley; Smith, A.; Smith, D.; Smithee; Soileau; Stiles; Swinford; Tallas; Taylor; Telford; Thomas; Thompson, G.; Thompson, S.; Turner; Uher; Van de Putte; Von Dohlen; Vowell; Wallace; Watkins; Wentworth; Williamson; Willis; Willy; Wilson; Wolens; Yarbrough; Yost.

Nay — Kamel.

Present, not voting — Mr. Speaker(C); Moreno.

The Honorable George Bayoud, Jr., 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 72nd 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 Carter, chair; Brimer, Cain, Gibson, Goodman, Grusendorf, Laney, Mowery, Park, G. Thompson, Williamson, and Willis.

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 72nd Legislature of the State of Texas, which was administered by the Honorable Joe Spurlock II, Justice, Second District Court of Appeals of Texas and former Speaker Billy Clayton.

INTRODUCTION OF PLATFORM GUESTS

The chair recognized the Honorable David Cain, who introduced podium guests and other state officials as follows:

The Honorable William P. Clements, Governor of the State of Texas, and First Lady of Texas, Rita Clements; the Honorable Ann Richards, Governor-elect of the State of Texas; the Honorable John Sharp, Comptroller of Public Accounts; the Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison, State Treasurer; the Honorable

Dan Morales, Attorney General; the Honorable Rick Perry, Commissioner of Agriculture; the Honorable Jim Nugent and the Honorable Bob Krueger, Railroad Commissioners; the Honorable Lena Guerrero, Railroad Commissioner-designate; the Honorable John Cornyn, the Honorable Bob Gammage, the Honorable Nathan Hecht, and the Honorable Jack Hightower, Associate Justices of the Texas Supreme Court; the Honorable Jimmy Carroll, Chief Justice of the 3rd District Court of Appeals; the Honorable Jim Wright and Betty Wright; the Honorable Mike Andrews, the Honorable Martin Frost, the Honorable Pete Geren, and the Honorable Greg Laughlin, United States Congress; Lieutenant Governor William P. Hobby; the Honorable Lee Cooke, Mayor of Austin, and Barbara Cooke; and distinguished former speakers of the Texas House.

ADDRESS BY SPEAKER LEWIS

Representative Cain recognized the Honorable Pete Laney, who introduced Speaker Gibson D. Lewis.

Speaker Lewis introduced the following members of his family: Sandra Lewis, Marie Croft, Jack Lewis, Cammie and Cole Morvan, MacKenzie and Hunter Morvan, Cathy Baker, and Megan and Drue Baker.

Speaker Lewis addressed the house as follows:

Mr. Secretary, Governor Clements, Governor-elect Richards, honored guests, my colleagues, ladies and gentlemen:

Fellow members, this is a proud and solemn moment for me. I say that with gratitude to all of you who have once again expressed confidence in my leadership.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Looking back over the years that I have served as speaker, I hope it can be said that I have been true to my original pledge to you to be a member's speaker and that I have operated in an atmosphere of honesty, fairness, and openness.

I know that I have tried my level best. And I renew that pledge to you today, believing that is what you want, and knowing that is what the people of this great state deserve.

There is always something exhilarating about the opening of a new session of the legislature. The slate is clean, a new agenda of unmet needs beckons us, and a spirit of cooperation prevails. For the moment, at least, everything seems possible.

The reality, of course, is that anything is possible, within the confines of our revenues. And that's the reality we face, members. Our dreams can only be as large as our pocketbook. And, the fact is, from a financial point of view, our state is still facing tough times.

When I was first elected speaker, things were different. We were in the midst of one of the greatest periods of prosperity this state has ever known. State revenues were coming in at record levels.

By 1986, the bottom had dropped out of the Texas economy. We found ourselves dividing up a budgetary shortfall, and you may be sure that every state agency had to share the burden of that shortfall. We played no favorites.

So if you're looking for a speaker who has had the experience to lead you

through lean times, you've got the right party. Lean times are about all I have known as speaker. Many's the morning I looked into my bathroom mirror and saw Comptroller Bob Bullock looking back at me, informing me he was reducing his revenue estimate one more time. Those were the days when you just wanted to go back to bed.

But we rose to the challenge and we enacted some of the most progressive and far-reaching legislation ever to come out of this body:

—We passed a public education reform package that sent a message that we will no longer tolerate mediocrity in our schools; that Texas intends to become number one in our classrooms as well as on our playing fields. And then we passed a public school finance reform bill that said to our school districts that fairness, not wealth, will be the key to quality education.

—In higher education, we brought tuition up to realistic levels, created a statewide construction fund, and established a basic skills test for entering freshmen.

—We took giant steps to reduce death and injury on our highways with a seat belt law, a tougher DWI law, an open container law, and a motorcyclists' helmet law.

—We repealed the Blue Laws and enacted a pari-mutuel racing bill.

—We provided additional funds for cancer research and we passed the first comprehensive AIDS bill.

—We built new prisons to meet overcrowded conditions, we overhauled the criminal justice system, and we streamlined the parole system.

—We restructured business and economic development programs in state government into the new Texas Department of Commerce—leading to a more significant role for state government in stimulating the Texas economy.

—We created the first indigent health care program in Texas history.

—We did more to assure an abundant supply of water to future generations in one session than all the other sessions combined.

—In enacting these—and dozens of other major bills—we proved we could rise to the challenge in the face of adversity. We proved that tough times are no match for the invincible Texas spirit.

Now we are going to prove it again. We are going to prove that we have the vision and the courage and the will to meet the essential needs of this state, no matter what the obstacles.

The Legislative Budget Board has drafted a budget for the biennium that is very close to the comptroller's revenue estimate.

That budget is \$166 million under current spending levels. It is a budget this state cannot live with. But it represents a starting point, and in my opinion, the most responsible starting point, for the deliberations ahead.

We will begin the process with a balanced budget and end with a balanced budget—knowing that every dollar we add in new spending is a dollar we must raise from the people of Texas. And make no mistake, we must add dollars to this budget:

For education—to continue advancing toward our goal of ensuring a quality education for every child in our state.

For prisons—to end the menace of criminals being returned to our streets before their time has been served.

For human services—to meet our obligations to provide decent and

humane treatment for the mentally ill, to provide medical care for the poor and to protect our children—this state's greatest treasure—from violence within their own families.

Whether we find those dollars through cuts in other areas or through higher taxes, the choices will not be easy.

Each session, we go down the road of scrubbing the budget—of trimming the fat from state government. And with each passing session, state government has grown leaner. And with each succeeding session, further savings have grown harder to find.

We have scrubbed until our knuckles have worn bare.

The easy targets were spotted long ago. Hunting down those that are left, in this session, will require the most rigorous examination of state government ever conducted.

I have endorsed the idea of performance audits down to the program level in every state agency.

Such a process should identify inefficiencies and root out poor management. In the end, it could guide our hands in making cuts.

This budget will not be easily crafted. But those of you who know me, know this well: There will be no one more determined to hold down spending or more reluctant to raise taxes.

Even in the worst of times, the enduring values and strengths of Texas remain strong, just like the foundations of this historic Capitol Building.

We all know that this building itself is in need of extensive repair and renovation. But its foundations, after a hundred long years, remain strong and solid and dependable and true. We can continue to build on them, just as we can continue to build on the foundations of Texas, even in the face of adversity.

For some people, adversity is a crutch—an excuse for weakness and inaction. For others, adversity is a spur—a challenge. It calls us to action now. And we will meet our obligations.

The first obligation of this legislative session is ethics reform.

I promise you this: There will be action to produce a new ethics and campaign finance law that I hope will be a landmark for this state.

We must recognize that times have changed, that this institution must change. And each of us must change the way we conduct our business. Practices that were acceptable in the past now raise doubts about the integrity of our system. We must understand that it is no longer enough to be innocent; we must be above suspicion.

We can and we will rewrite and strengthen our ethics laws to make them say what they mean and mean what they say.

The cornerstone of this bill should be creation of an ethics commission to enforce ethics laws.

We must make this a priority in this session—to restore public faith in our democratic process, to protect the integrity of this great body, and to protect ourselves as members from unwarranted and unfair suspicion.

But we must do more.

We have an obligation this session to redistrict our state—a fundamental responsibility of assuring each citizen that his or her vote will be weighed

equally and fairly on the scales of democracy.

Another priority will be insurance regulatory reform. Our task will be to strike a realistic balance between the solvency of the insurance industry and fair and reasonable rates for the insured. And while we're at it, we must draw a clear dividing line between profits and profiteering when major disasters occur.

We must take further steps during this session to protect our environment by implementing fully the federal Clean Air Act—not only because it is mandated, but because it is right—and because it is crucial to the quality of life in Texas for generations to come.

In addition, we must develop this state's capability to respond to oil spills in our coastal waters.

This session must examine ways to improve our judicial selection process in Texas to assure fairness across the board and judicial independence.

Reform of our products liability laws must also be a priority. Fair play is at the heart of American justice, but our state's products liability laws are not fair. Our task will be to make those laws clear and predictable, to protect both the business community and the consumer equally.

Obviously, we must also be prepared to deal with public school finance and workers' compensation reforms, if the state courts strike down the existing laws. But if that happens, let us deal with them in a calm and orderly manner. Let's not tie ourselves up in knots over these issues and lose sight of the other matters that must be resolved.

These, Members, are my priorities for the 72nd Session of the Legislature and they are priorities that will carry us into the 21st century.

And now I would like to close with a few personal words to those 30 men and women who took the oath for the first time today.

You are about to take part in one of the most stimulating and ennobling experiences that life can offer. I believe that public service, in any form, is the highest calling that a citizen can aspire to. And for those of you here today, this marks the beginning of a journey which will take you down history's path. From now until the end of this session, you will be sharing—and shaping—the destiny of the State of Texas.

The men and women who have had the honor of serving in this great legislative body in our long history were each transformed in one way or another. Many of them went on from here to distinguished careers in other political offices or other fields of endeavor. But whatever they went on to do, nearly all of them left here as wiser men and women, and taller in stature.

Today I begin my 21st year in the Texas House of Representatives. More than a third of my life has been spent here—more than half of my adult life. I love this body, almost as much as I love life itself. I love it for its majesty and its traditions and its accomplishments.

I revere it as the best instrument of democracy ever devised, despite its flaws. It is imperfect: sprawling, frustrating, and contentious. But it is a system that works. It works because it is a reflection, not of the will of individuals, but of the wisdom of the whole.

It is a place where you—the freshman men and women—will join your colleagues to daily test yourselves against the strength of your convictions,

sometimes to find yourselves wanting, sometimes to find yourselves, surprisingly, more courageous than you would have believed.

Our late, beloved Lyndon Johnson used to say that most legislators vote their consciences more often than it is politically safe for them to do so. I have found that to be true of the members of this legislative body. And I know it will be true of you members of the freshman class.

So to each of you new members of this 72nd Legislature, I wish you Godspeed as you begin this journey down democracy's tortuous, uncertain—and glorious—path. I wish I could impart to you some instant wisdom or unerring advice that would serve as a road map to help guide your way, but I cannot.

Each of you will have to find your own way, following the dictates of your heart and mind. But I will leave you with these immortal words of Sam Houston which have served as the next best thing to a road map to many who have gone before you: "Do right and risk the consequences."

Thank you all. God bless you all. God bless Texas.