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OF THE
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OF THE
Seventy-Fifth Legislature
OF THE
STATE OF TEXAS

BEGUN AND HELD AT
THE CITY OF AUSTIN
JANUARY 14, 1997



VOLUME I

HR 2 - ADOPTED
(by Gray and Hilbert)

The chair laid before the house the following resolution:

HR 2

WHEREAS, Section 9, Article III, 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 75th 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 three 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.

HR 2 was read and was adopted without objection.

(Woolley now present)

ELECTION OF THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The secretary of state announced that the next order of business would be the election of the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Seventy-Fifth Legislature of the State of Texas, and stated nominations for speaker would now be in order.

The secretary of state recognized the Honorable Brian McCall of Collin County, who placed in nomination for Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Seventy-Fifth Legislature of the State of Texas the name of the Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney of Hale County, speaking as follows:

Mr. Secretary, Governor Bush, members of the house, special guests.

It wasn't that long ago, not that long ago at all, that surveys generally and consistently placed legislators on par with garbage collectors in the public's esteem. Now, I think this is an unfair image. I can think of several legislators who would make excellent garbage collectors; but, I think, few garbage collectors would make good legislators.

Perhaps you saw the San Antonio Express poll of late that suggests that Texans now have more faith in us. A new view! According to that poll we rank just behind the U.S. Supreme Court and ahead of banks, Congress, newspaper reporters, and (if this alone shouldn't be proof enough) pollsters!

This is no coincidence. You see, when he became speaker, Pete Laney set the house to work. Opened up the process. Improved the rules. When Pete Laney became speaker, he didn't know if his tenure would be the best of times or the worst of times—he just knew it was the only time he had. And after 140 days, friends and foes agreed—under his leadership, it was time well spent. The image of the institution had a new glow.

You might think that is why I rise to nominate Pete Laney, but it isn't that. That alone is reason enough. But, it's not that.

Being speaker isn't easy. Doing it well—even harder. I once told Pete that being speaker must be like trying to hold 149 corks underwater at the same time! It's not that the house members are particularly difficult. Most of us

are broad-minded enough to admit there are two sides to every question—our own side, and the side that no intelligent, informed, sane, and self-respecting person could possibly hold!

The respect and affection we hold for Pete has been heightened by the respect he has always shown for various members' convictions even though they may be different from his own. You see, Pete believes he serves two constituencies—the people back home, and the members of this house.

The Austin American Statesman says: "Laney governs the House delicately and deferentially."

You might think this is why I rise to nominate Pete Laney, but it isn't that. That alone is reason enough. But, it's not that.

Pete believes in non-partisan action rather than partisan gridlock. He has said, "In this chamber, I see no Democrats, no Republicans, I see 150 representatives of the people of Texas."

While we all are borne along by the tides of our respective political parties (some more giddily than others), Pete knows that for the good of Texas, policy must take precedent.

Petty, perfidious, partisan posturing hasn't worked in Washington. It won't work here!

Perhaps you believe this is why I rise to nominate Pete Laney for speaker of the house but, it isn't that. That alone is a significant enough reason. But, it's not that, at all.

It's not even that under his leadership (both sessions) we have completed our work in 140 days without special sessions and within the existing budget!

As a farmer and as the speaker, Pete knows that each day we sow the seeds that we must one day harvest. Pete loves his work. He cares about people. And if you know Pete Laney you know he loves his family—his wife Nelda, his daughters Jamey and KaLyn, and his son J Pete.

Speaking of Nelda, (who, by the way has been a gracious, giving first lady of this chamber) I'm told that when Pete first decided to run for the legislature, Nelda wasn't too excited about the idea. (But then, I've never heard of God calling anyone into public service with a voice loud enough for the whole family to hear.)

But once the campaign started, she went all over the district stumping for Pete. His victory owes itself to the fact that many thought they were voting for Nelda for state representative. At Texas Tech, where they met, Nelda graduated with honors. Pete graduated.

As I look at this friend, this mentor, this leader today, I must conclude that even after a quarter of a century of extraordinary service in this chamber, his work is not yet done.

Yes, Mr. Secretary, I rise to nominate Pete Laney as speaker of the house for the simple reason that as speaker, he has never tried to hold the 149 corks underwater. Instead, he lets each rise to the extent that they are able.

Mr. Secretary, I have watched this man with all the light and darkness I have, and I can tell you that in the winter of my 38th year—in all my time—I never saw so much strong leadership and so little arrogance in a personality of such force in a position of power.

And so, Mr. Secretary, I nominate one who does not have a price at which he can be bought; who does not borrow from integrity to pay for expediency;

a man whose handshake is an ironclad contract; who is as honest in small matters as he is in large ones; a man who still has the same friends he made 20 years ago—the Honorable Pete Laney of Hale Center!

The secretary of state recognized the Honorable Sherri Greenberg of Travis County, who seconded the nomination of the Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney, speaking as follows:

If someone who did not know Pete Laney asked me to describe him, I would say, "That's easy to do, but not simple."

Why, you might ask, would it be easy? Because it is easy to describe him as a hardworking problem solver, an honest man of his word, and a caring individual.

Why then would it not be simple? Because being a true leader and a great speaker of the Texas House of Representatives is never simple. It requires the patriotic devotion of Patrick Henry, the work habits of John Henry, and vision of Henry the Navigator, and the patience of Job. That is the Pete Laney I have come to know, admire, and respect.

Pete Laney has always been a workhorse. Sorry, Pete, maybe you wanted to be a racehorse. Whether he was chairing the house administration or state affairs committees or helping mentor new members, or championing significant new legislation, he was always hard at work for the good of the State of Texas.

However, during Pete's first term as speaker, he went into high gear. After making major changes in the rules of this house to ensure that members would have ample time to review legislation, that there would not be unnecessary surprises, and that each member would have an opportunity to succeed on his or her own terms, Pete opened up the process to everyone. This didn't make the process easier, but it made it more fair and more effective. Although we may have more debate than before, because of Pete's leadership, no one doubted that we were here to work hard to provide solutions for the people of Texas.

Last session, Speaker Laney again set the tone and the example for all of us. He demonstrated his patriotism and leadership through his cooperative relationship with our new governor, and showed that he would not let partisan politics interfere with our common goals. Through his continued good relationship with our lieutenant governor and the members of the senate, he showed us the importance of these two chambers working together as a team. In addition, he let the committees and the members do their work and express their opinions in some major reforms in public education, welfare, criminal justice, and other areas.

Pete's patience is best demonstrated by his overall leadership style. He never fails to set a course for us and expresses his opinions on what is right, but he also lets us have our say and always encourages us to do as our conscience dictates. Pete Laney knows from experience that if we do this, the people will be well served. That is his vision for the State of Texas and that is his greatest goal.

As you can see, it is a great honor for me to stand before you today and second the nomination of the Honorable Pete Laney as speaker, which I hereby do.

The secretary of state recognized the Honorable Henry Cuellar of Webb County, who seconded the nomination of the Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney, speaking as follows:

As we gather today as 150 representatives from a large and diverse state, we become one deliberate body—one that allows us to bring together our different opinions, experiences, and hopes of the people we represent.

It, therefore, becomes paramount that the speaker of the house allows each individual member to use his or her God given talents to the best of his or her ability, not only to better represent the member's district, but more importantly, to work together to build our vision for Texas. Ladies and gentlemen, that speaker is James E. "Pete" Laney of Hale Center, Texas.

Through Pete Laney's leadership, Chairman Rob Junell and the appropriations committee have developed a result-oriented budgeting system that has made state government—more than ever—more efficient, more effective, and more accountable to the taxpayers of the State of Texas.

I am proud to say that we have not expanded the bureaucracy, but we have a smaller government with honest and hardworking state employees, we have not raised taxes, and we have become more customer-oriented as we provide more, and better, services to Texans. This performance-based budgeting system is the top model, and envy, of the entire United States!

Through Pete Laney's leadership, Chairman Hugo Berlanga and the public health committee will develop a system of providing health insurance for the 1.2 million uninsured children in Texas. Last session, we passed HB 997 that established a pilot program to provide health insurance for uninsured children—a public and private partnership that works. It is my hope that through this proven model, we can pass the Texas Healthy Kids Corporation bill this session.

Through Pete Laney's leadership, we have opened up our legislative process where, through hard work and commitment, bright legislators in their respective committees have met the challenge of addressing the vital issues of the day: public and higher education, law and order, transportation, health and human services, agriculture, and international trade.

Pete Laney has helped set up a legislative structure where the will of the house prevails, and not the authority of one person.

Pete Laney has helped set up a legislative environment where legislators represent their districts, and not special interests.

Pete Laney has helped set up a legislative open market place where you, each single legislator, can fulfill your constitutional and moral responsibilities, and where every single Texan in this great state can expect that we, as legislators, do the right thing every time we step into this historic chamber.

Together, we can fix those things that are wrong. Together, we can make our streets safer, our schools better, and our people healthier! Together, with your help and with the help of Pete Laney, we can move Texas forward.

And, with the guidance of Pete Laney's philosophy, we are going to move Texas forward and make Texas stronger.

A Texas where the private sector is the engine of economic growth.

A Texas where government does not raise children—parents do.

A Texas where education is our top priority.

A Texas where we work hard to expand opportunities and not bureaucracy.

This is Pete Laney's philosophy. This is our philosophy.

Ladies and gentlemen, with great honor and respect, I therefore stand before you, to second the nomination of the Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney as speaker of the Texas House of Representatives.

The secretary of state recognized the Honorable Delwin Jones of Lubbock County, who seconded the nomination of the Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney, speaking as follows:

I first met Pete and Nelda Laney on the campaign trail in 1972. Pete Laney and I were both running for office—the same office.

Back in those days, West Texas legislative campaigns were not media oriented.

Campaigns were based on personal, one-on-one contacts with individual voters—in coffee meetings with small groups, community pie suppers, business group meetings, and farm group meetings.

It was in meetings such as this that Reta and I got to know Pete and Nelda.

Now all of us here have run campaigns to get elected. And we all have learned that you don't really know a person's character until you have run a campaign against them.

I recognized early on that Pete Laney is a hardworking, honest, and committed worker.

Visiting with each other at all of those pie suppers and coop meetings, Pete and I developed a true friendship, a friendship based on respect for each other.

And in one radio interview during that campaign, I was asked, "What kind of person is Pete Laney?"

My response was that if I were not running, I would be supporting him for election.

Well, I didn't vote for him in that election, but it has been an honor and a privilege to vote for him for speaker.

And, as the only member of this house who has ever run against Pete Laney, I am honored to second his nomination as speaker of the Texas House of Representatives.

The secretary of state recognized the Honorable Al Price of Jefferson County, who seconded the nomination of the Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney, speaking as follows:

To the Honorable Antonio O. Garza, Jr., secretary of state, to the honored guests and friends, and to the members of the Texas House of Representatives, I come before you today to second the nomination of Pete Laney as speaker of the Texas House of Representatives for this, the 75th session of the Texas Legislature. And let me hasten to point out that I am extremely pleased for having been allowed this opportunity to do so.

Members, now that we have been sworn in—in sharp contrast to having been sworn at, during the various campaigns to get here—our first and, indeed, one of the most important decisions which we shall make is to elect a leader to steer us through this session.

Our great state is going into its 151st year as a state and as we embark on our constitutionally-mandated 140-day regular session of the Texas Legislature, our choice of a captain, as it were, is crucial.

A vital lesson which I learned early in navigation training is that the best assurance of arriving at a planned destination is to get started on course. We have the opportunity now to make the proper start.

This house belongs to the members. We choose our own leader. This

process of selecting our own leader is the manifestation of the democratic process in its most pristine form. And again, that is why I feel privileged to be part of it.

The press and the pundits have bombarded us with enumerations and descriptions of the myriad problems facing this legislature. And, indeed, it is a daunting agenda.

But under the proper leadership—that of Pete Laney—these problems are challenges providing opportunities to enable Texans to be all they can be and to enable this legislature to carry our great state to new heights.

We have great need of a leader with experience.

We have great need of a leader with integrity.

We have great need of a leader with sober judgement.

We have great need of a leader with courage.

We have great need of a leader with compassion.

We have great need of a leader with humility.

We have great need of a leader with love of family.

We have great need of a leader with values.

Pete Laney is such a leader.

Pete Laney is the man we need now.

I have served in this historic body for 20 years. Pete was here when I arrived. He is a seasoned veteran who knows the legislative process thoroughly and who respects the glorious traditions of this house of representatives.

I have noted the respect and esteem accorded him by the members. I have come to know and respect him. I have even learned where Hale Center is located. For those of you who don't know, it is down the road from Muleshoe.

Pete and I have not agreed on every issue which has come before this body. But even when we disagreed, I always found him to be respectful of opposing views, civil in demeanor, conciliatory in dialogue, and sober in judgement.

Pete Laney is the man to lead us.

We need a leader—not a vacillator.

Pete Laney is that man.

We need a consensus-maker—not a dictator.

Pete Laney is that man.

We need someone who is courageous—not foolhardy.

Pete Laney is that man.

We need someone who can interact with persons of higher rank, with peers, and with persons of lesser rank, with equanimity and not, as Emerson cautioned, "One who cowers before superiors and acts the tyrant towards persons of lesser rank."

Pete Laney is that man.

We need a leader who has pride in the role and tradition of this historic body—and not a self-serving opportunist.

Members, at this juncture in the history of our great state, we have the rare confluence of the man (Pete Laney), the mission (to address the problems of our state), and the means (the talents of each member of this house) to carry Texas forward towards the new millennium as the torchbearer for all the other states to follow.

In Pete Laney, we have the right leader for these times. I am happy to second his nomination and to recommend him to this house without any reservation whatsoever.

Thank you.

The secretary of state recognized the Honorable Barry Telford of Bowie County, who seconded the nomination of the Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney, speaking as follows:

Mr. Secretary, members of the house, and honored guests.

I am pleased and personally honored to second the nomination of James E. "Pete" Laney as speaker of the Texas House of Representatives.

One of the members I met in my first days as a house member in 1987 was Pete Laney of Hale Center—a place as obscure to most people as my own hometown of DeKalb.

That first session, Tom Uher, Pete's desk-mate, told me not to let Pete's self-effacing demeanor fool me because he said, "Laney's got one of the best minds and hearts you'll ever run across."

How true that simple statement has proven to be over the years. Especially, the last four years as he has served us and Texas as our speaker.

There are many attributes that I could name that would describe what to me makes a good speaker. All of them would apply to Pete Laney.

I will only mention two and I think the rest are derivatives of these two.

First, Pete Laney loves the democratic process that allows us, as a people, to govern ourselves. Pete understands that debate, mutual respect, and compromise are vital ingredients that make up a legislative body in a free society.

Without each element, our system of self-government breaks down. And problems not only don't get solved, problems can't even be addressed in a reasonable and civil way.

Some folks call this attitude "bipartisanship," and it does lead to that, but I call it respect for the system—respect for our system of government.

Without that system of government—self-government—our state and ultimately our country becomes a place very different from what we know and love.

Pete Laney understands this very basic fact of self-government. He loves this house and its precepts. He honors this house. He has brought honor and respect to this place where we all work for Texas. He does all he can do to make this a place of honest debate, mutual respect, and compromise.

The second attribute Pete possesses is character. I read somewhere that when this life is over for us, as individuals, the only thing that remains of us is character.

I think that is true in every day life and also in a legislative body.

The members of the legislature that have been here for awhile know, and you new members will soon discover, that this is a place where character counts.

I know of no other venue in our society where agreements are made almost daily, sometimes involving the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars, and no contract is signed. Only a simple handshake and our word binds us to our agreements.

Many times, people want to bemoan the sorry state of affairs in the legislature. Public pundits want to criticize the men and women who serve Texas. While sometimes their criticisms are just, I would challenge them to find a place where character counts any more in our society than here in this chamber. And yes, even across the rotunda, it counts, too!

Pete Laney has character in abundance. His word is his bond. The integrity of this house has always been of the utmost importance to Speaker Laney.

We, as house members and as Texans, are the beneficiaries of his character.

Oh yes, and one more very important reason to re-elect Pete Laney as speaker. We can then keep Nelda Laney as the First Lady of the Texas House. That's good for Texas, too.

I second the nomination of Pete Laney of Hale Center as speaker of the House of Representatives of the Seventy-Fifth Legislature.

Representative Telford moved that nominations cease and that the chief clerk of the house of representatives be instructed to cast the vote of all members of the house of representatives for the Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney of Hale County for speaker of the House of Representatives of the Seventy-Fifth Legislature, and that the Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney of Hale County be unanimously elected speaker by acclamation, with any member being permitted to cast a "Present" or "Nay" vote by providing such information to the journal clerk.

The motion prevailed without objection.

The secretary of state directed the chief clerk to cast the ballots of all members for the Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney for speaker of the House of Representatives of the Seventy-Fifth Legislature of the State of Texas.

On the motion to elect the Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney of Hale County for Speaker of the House of Representative of the Seventy-Fifth Legislature of the State of Texas, the chief clerk cast the ballots of the members as follows:

Yeas — Alexander; Allen; Alvarado; Averitt; Bailey; Berlanga; Bonnen; Bosse; Brimer; Burnam; Carter; Chavez; Chisum; Christian; Clark; Coleman; Cook; Corte; Counts; Crabb; Craddick; Cuellar; Culberson; Danburg; Davila; Davis; Delisi; Denny; Driver; Dukes; Dunnam; Dutton; Edwards; Ehrhardt; Eiland; Elkins; Farrar; Finnell; Flores; Gallego; Galloway; Garcia; Giddings; Glaze; Goodman; Goolsby; Gray; Greenberg; Grusendorf; Gutierrez; Haggerty; Hamric; Hartnett; Hawley; Heflin; Hernandez; Hilbert; Hilderbran; Hill; Hinojosa; Hirschi; Hochberg; Hodge; Holzheuser; Horn; Howard; Hunter; Hupp; Isett; Jackson; Janek; Jones, D.; Jones, J.; Junell; Kamel; Keel; Keffer; King; Krusee; Kubiak; Kuempel; Laney; Lewis, G.; Longoria; Luna; Madden; Marchant; Maxey; McCall; McClendon; McReynolds; Merritt; Moffat; Moreno; Mowery; Naishtat; Nixon; Oakley; Ogden; Oliveira; Palmer; Patterson; Pickett; Pitts; Place; Price; Puente; Rabuck; Ramsay; Rangel; Raymond; Reyna, A.; Reyna, E.; Rhodes; Rodriguez; Sadler; Seaman; Serna; Shields; Siebert; Smith; Smithee; Solis; Solomons; Staples; Stiles; Swinford; Talton; Telford; Thompson; Tillery; Torres; Uher; Van de Putte; Walker; West; Williams; Wilson; Wise; Wohlgemuth; Wolens; Woolley; Yarbrough; Zbranek.

HOUSE NOTIFIED

A committee from the senate was announced at the door of the house and, being admitted, notified the house that the senate is organized and ready to transact business.

ELECTION OF THE SPEAKER - (continued)

The Honorable Antonio O. Garza, Jr., secretary of state of the State of Texas, then declared the Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney of Hale County to be the duly elected speaker of the House of Representatives of the Seventy-Fifth Legislature of the State of Texas.

COMMITTEE APPOINTED

The secretary of state announced the appointment of the following committee to escort speaker-elect James E. "Pete" Laney to the speaker's rostrum for the purpose of the taking of the constitutional oath of office by the speaker-elect: Representatives Uher, chair, Alvarado, Crabb, Davis, Glaze, Hawley, Jackson, Jones of Dallas, Naishtat, Solis, Swinford, and West.

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

OATH OF OFFICE TAKEN BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

The Honorable James E. "Pete" Laney of Hale County, having been escorted to the speaker's rostrum, took the constitutional oath of office as speaker of the House of Representatives of the Seventy-Fifth Legislature of the State of Texas, which was administered by the Honorable John Thomas Boyd, chief justice of the court of appeals for the Seventh Court of Appeals District of Texas.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The secretary of state recognized the Honorable G. E. "Buddy" West, who introduced the following members of the speaker's family: Nelda Laney, his wife; KaLyn Laney, his daughter; Jamey and Ronald Phillips, his daughter and son-in-law; J Pete Laney, his son; W. G. and Frances Laney, his father and mother; and Ryan Laney, his nephew.

ADDRESS BY SPEAKER LANEY

Representative West recognized the Honorable Tom Uher of Matagorda County, who introduced Speaker James E. "Pete" Laney.

Speaker Laney addressed the house as follows:

Members of the house of representatives, distinguished guests, families, and friends, thank you.

I thank you for your support, your encouragement, and your advice. Serving you, my constituents, and the people of Texas as speaker of the house is the greatest single honor I have ever received.

I will do everything within my ability to continue earning the trust that you have placed in me today. And I pledge to perform my duties and operate the office of the speaker in ways that bring credit to this great institution.

To those of you who are being sworn in for the first time today, I welcome you to one of the most challenging and rewarding experiences that you will ever have.

If you work hard to represent your constituents and your principles, I know that five months from now you will be proud of what you have accomplished.

To those of you who served in the last legislature, I want to say welcome back. This chamber has been empty for a long time.

We have just completed the second consecutive legislature during which there were no special sessions. That has not occurred in Texas for half a century.

It is a measure of our success in recent sessions—holding true to our Texas tradition of a part-time citizen legislature. We have worked long, hard hours during regular sessions and kept our focus on the major issues facing our state.

In recent years, we have proven that we can address the most difficult crises. We have proven we can work together to develop solutions to the issues of greatest concern to Texans.

We have proven we can have legitimate differences without becoming gridlocked. We can have open debate without bitterness and name-calling. We can reach agreement without sacrificing principles.

We have kept our promise to conduct our business in ways that earn the respect and support of our citizens.

We have made our legislative process more accessible to our citizens than ever before. And we will continue to use the latest technology, through the Internet and expanded television coverage, to inform the public and involve them in our work.

I have always believed that the way we conduct our business of writing the laws determines the level of public support for those laws. Our process must be fair; it must be honest; and it must be open to every person in our state.

My agenda is to make the legislative process work. My goal is to preside in a way that makes it possible for you to give voice and action to the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of the people of Texas—the people you represent.

You, the members of the house, will decide our legislative agenda in the weeks and months ahead. And I want each of you to bring your best ideas, your most important issues, before this house for its consideration.

Unlike previous sessions, we begin this session with no overwhelming crisis demanding an immediate solution.

In this decade, Texas has become the leading job producing state in our nation. We are blessed with a healthy, diversified, and growing state economy.

But we cannot afford to become complacent. No one should believe that we have resolved all the major issues that challenge our state, because we now face the much greater challenge of legislating for the future.

A number of studies already are sounding alarms about that future, from the prospect of severe statewide water shortages to predictions of a future work force that will be poorly trained and earning lower incomes.

I refuse to accept such a bleak destiny for this great state. It is our responsibility as leaders to make certain that this is not the kind of future we leave to our children and our grandchildren.

We must be able to look beyond the politics of the next opinion poll or the next election and legislate for the next generation.

We must make certain that every child in Texas receives the kind of education needed for success in the 21st century.

We must plan to meet the needs of a population that could increase by 15 million people over the next 30 years.

Among those needs will be adequate water supplies, schools, health care, transportation, utility systems, energy resources, and a tax system that will meet our future needs and fairly distribute the responsibility for funding the services that we must provide.

It is my hope that when our successors convene in this chamber 20 or 30 years from now, they will praise our wisdom, our foresight, and our courage to invest in the future of Texas.

We have proven that we can deal with the crises of the past and the present. We must now prove that we can steer our state toward a promising and prosperous future for all of our citizens.

Texas is a state with a tremendous heritage. It is up to us to create a future that continues to build upon the greatness of our past.

Seeing the talent, the ability, and the knowledge assembled in this chamber today, I know our future is in responsible hands.

It's time to go to work. Let's get the job done.