

# HOUSE JOURNAL

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EIGHTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION

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## PROCEEDINGS

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FOURTH DAY — TUESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2019

The house met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the speaker.

The roll of the house was called and a quorum was announced present (Record 12).

Present — Mr. Speaker(C); Allen; Allison; Anchia; Anderson; Bailes; Beckley; Bell, C.; Bell, K.; Bernal; Biedermann; Blanco; Bohac; Bonnen; Bowers; Buckley; Bucy; Burns; Burrows; Button; Cain; Calanni; Canales; Capriglione; Clardy; Cole; Coleman; Collier; Cortez; Craddick; Cyrier; Darby; Davis, S.; Davis, Y.; Dean; Deshotel; Dominguez; Dutton; Farrar; Flynn; Frank; Frullo; Geren; Gervin-Hawkins; Goldman; González, J.; González, M.; Goodwin; Guerra; Guillen; Gutierrez; Harless; Harris; Hefner; Hernandez; Herrero; Hinojosa; Holland; Howard; Huberty; Hunter; Israel; Johnson, E.; Johnson, J.D.; Johnson, J.E.; Kacal; King, K.; King, P.; King, T.; Klick; Krause; Kuempel; Lambert; Landgraf; Lang; Larson; Leach; Leman; Longoria; Lozano; Lucio; Martinez; Martinez Fischer; Metcalf; Meyer; Meza; Middleton; Miller; Minjarez; Moody; Morrison; Muñoz; Murphy; Murr; Neave; Nevárez; Noble; Oliverson; Ortega; Pacheco; Paddie; Parker; Patterson; Paul; Perez; Phelan; Price; Ramos; Raney; Raymond; Reynolds; Rodriguez; Romero; Rose; Rosenthal; Sanford; Schaefer; Shaheen; Sheffield; Sherman; Shine; Smith; Smithee; Springer; Stephenson; Stickland; Stucky; Swanson; Talarico; Thierry; Thompson, E.; Thompson, S.; Tinderholt; Toth; Turner, C.; Turner, J.; VanDeaver; Vo; Walle; White; Wilson; Wray; Wu; Zedler; Zerwas; Zwiener.

Absent — Ashby.

The invocation was offered by Michael F. Olson, bishop, Diocese of Fort Worth, Fort Worth, as follows:

Lord, our God, we stand together here in this legislature, mindful of your providence and love for each human person whom you have created in your image and likeness. We call out to you in our awareness of the responsibility of government, entrust it to these men and women, legislators, by the people of Texas, who in their hearts seek to belong to you and to each other in the order of your goodness.

We ask your blessing upon our representatives as they begin their legislative activity with a renewed sense of mission to preserve the dignity of their fellow citizens and the tireless and demanding pursuit of the common good. Grant them a spirit of docility and simplicity of heart. May they heed your prophet Isaiah's call to reason together, intentionally aware of human sinfulness in the light of your mercy and justice and of the fundamental goodness of your creation of the

human person. May they be mindful of the vulnerable in our society and equitable in their deliberation. Might their desire for authentic justice be strengthened, that the laws that they vote to enact might reflect your wisdom and design for human flourishing.

We pray that you might guard their speech, that all that they say in these chambers might elevate discourse in reflection of your beauty, grandeur, and truth. Might they seek always those aspects of the common good that are immaterial and can be shared together without being diminished in quantity. Expand their hearts in your love that they might truly desire the common good of all Texans united together and not simply the private interests of a few. We thank you, God, for their sacrifice and generosity to give of their time and talents in service to your people. Protect them and their families, and reward their generosity with your generosity. We pray in the confidence of your love. Amen.

The chair recognized Representative Beckley who led the house in the pledges of allegiance to the United States and Texas flags.

### **CAPITOL PHYSICIAN**

The chair recognized Representative Y. Davis who presented Dr. DeVry C. Anderson of Austin as the "Doctor for the Day."

### **HR 51 - ADOPTED**

**(by Y. Davis)**

Representative Y. Davis moved to suspend all necessary rules to take up and consider at this time **HR 51**.

The motion prevailed.

The following resolution was laid before the house:

**HR 51**, Commending Dr. DeVry C. Anderson of Austin for his participation in the Physician of the Day program.

**HR 51** was read and was adopted.

On motion of Representative Craddick, the names of all the members of the house were added to **HR 51** as signers thereof.

The house welcomed Dr. Anderson and thanked him for his participation in the Physician of the Day Program sponsored by the Texas Academy of Family Physicians.

### **HCR 26 - ADOPTED**

**(by Craddick)**

Representative Craddick moved to suspend all necessary rules to take up and consider at this time **HCR 26**.

The motion prevailed.

The following resolution was laid before the house:

**HCR 26**, Congratulating S. Javaid Anwar for being named the 2018 Top Hand by the Permian Basin Petroleum Association.

**HCR 26** was adopted.

On motion of Representative Landgraf, the names of all the members of the house were added to **HCR 26** as signers thereof.

(Ashby now present)

**HCR 6 - ADOPTED**  
(by Geren)

Representative Geren moved to suspend all necessary rules to take up and consider at this time **HCR 6**.

The motion prevailed.

The following resolution was laid before the house:

**HCR 6**, Granting the legislature permission to adjourn for more than three days during the period beginning on Wednesday, January 16, 2019, and ending on Tuesday, January 22, 2019.

**HCR 6** was adopted by (Record 13): 145 Yeas, 0 Nays, 1 Present, not voting.

Yeas — Allen; Allison; Anchia; Anderson; Ashby; Bailes; Beckley; Bell, C.; Bell, K.; Bernal; Biedermann; Blanco; Bohac; Bonnen; Bowers; Buckley; Bucy; Burns; Burrows; Button; Cain; Calanni; Canales; Capriglione; Clardy; Cole; Coleman; Collier; Cortez; Craddick; Cyrier; Darby; Davis, S.; Davis, Y.; Dean; Deshotel; Dominguez; Dutton; Farrar; Flynn; Frank; Frullo; Geren; Gervin-Hawkins; Goldman; González, J.; González, M.; Goodwin; Guerra; Guillen; Gutierrez; Harless; Harris; Hefner; Hernandez; Herrero; Hinojosa; Holland; Howard; Huberty; Hunter; Israel; Johnson, E.; Johnson, J.D.; Johnson, J.E.; Kacal; King, K.; King, P.; King, T.; Klick; Krause; Kuempel; Lambert; Landgraf; Lang; Larson; Leach; Leman; Longoria; Lozano; Lucio; Martinez; Martinez Fischer; Metcalf; Meyer; Meza; Middleton; Miller; Minjarez; Moody; Morrison; Murphy; Murr; Neave; Nevárez; Noble; Oliverson; Ortega; Pacheco; Paddie; Parker; Patterson; Paul; Perez; Phelan; Price; Ramos; Raney; Raymond; Reynolds; Rodriguez; Romero; Rose; Rosenthal; Sanford; Schaefer; Shaheen; Sheffield; Sherman; Shine; Smith; Smithee; Springer; Stephenson; Stickland; Stucky; Swanson; Talarico; Thierry; Thompson, E.; Thompson, S.; Tinderholt; Toth; Turner, C.; Turner, J.; VanDeaver; Vo; Walle; White; Wilson; Wray; Wu; Zedler; Zerwas; Zwiener.

Present, not voting — Mr. Speaker(C).

Absent — Muñoz.

**STATEMENT OF VOTE**

When Record No. 13 was taken, I was in the house but away from my desk. I would have voted yes.

Muñoz

### **INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

The chair recognized Representatives G. Bonnen, Thierry, and Reynolds who introduced Ted T. Ellis, artist; Samuel Collins III, advisor to the National Trust for Historic Preservation; Captain Paul J. Matthews, founder of the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum; and Reginald Moore, founder of the Texas Slave Descendants Society, honoring the African American History & Texas Educating through Art exhibit in the State Capitol.

### **PROVIDING FOR ADJOURNMENT**

At 10:04 a.m., Representative Geren moved that, at the conclusion of the joint session for the inauguration of the governor and lieutenant governor, the house adjourn until 11 a.m. tomorrow.

The motion prevailed.

### **RECESS**

Representative Geren moved that the house recess until 11 a.m. today.

The motion prevailed.

The house accordingly, at 10:04 a.m., recessed until 11 a.m. today.

### **INAUGURATION OF THE GOVERNOR AND LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR**

#### **(The House of Representatives and the Senate in Joint Session)**

At 11:05 a.m., the members of the house reconvened at the north entrance of the Capitol and were joined by the senate in a joint session for the purpose of inaugurating the governor-elect, the Honorable Greg Abbott, and the lieutenant governor-elect, the Honorable Dan Patrick.

With the Ross Volunteers of Texas A&M University forming a sabre arch, the governor-elect and Mrs. Abbott and lieutenant governor-elect and Mrs. Patrick and their party were escorted to seats on the platform.

Boy Scout Troop 201 from Longview led the pledge of allegiance to the United States flag.

The University of Texas Longhorn Band played the national anthem followed by a military flyover piloted by the Texas National Guard.

Dr. Renu Khator led the pledge of allegiance to the Texas flag.

The Honorable Kirk Watson, president pro tempore of the senate, called the senate to order and announced that a quorum of the senate was present.

The Honorable Dennis Bonnen, speaker of the house, called the house to order and announced that a quorum of the house of representatives was present.

Speaker Bonnen stated that the house and senate were in joint session for the purpose of inaugurating the governor and lieutenant governor.

Speaker Bonnen introduced Kenneth D. Roseman, rabbi emeritus, Congregation Beth Israel, Corpus Christi, and Temple Shalom, Dallas, who offered the invocation as follows:

We gather here this morning to celebrate something that we might otherwise take for granted. We celebrate our governor and lieutenant governor, other high state officials, members of the State of Texas legislature, and yes, also the men and the women who serve behind the scenes as their aides and staffs. We celebrate the fact that all of them are willing to devote their time and their energies to the noble profession of enhancing the welfare of the citizenry of this great state. They don't have to give their lives to serve us, but they do. It's a glorious choice that they have made. Their dedication and commitment to public service is a very special boon for those of us whose well-being they seek to enrich. It is a dedication for which we, their beneficiaries, express a most heartfelt gratitude.

We ask an equally special blessing upon them and their endeavors. May they be granted wisdom and insight and strength from the eternal source of goodness. And may they be rewarded by a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment at having pursued the paths of decency and righteousness. Yet when the winds of winter have blown across the wheat fields of the Panhandle and the prairies of our public purposes, let us remember that the privilege of public service is accompanied by the realities of responsibility and the unceasing commitments of conscience that flow unabated like the rivers that descend from the Hill Country to the Gulf's coastal plains.

Even as we pray for blessings of the most fortunate sort, so, too, we beseech from the Almighty the benedictions of forbearance, generosity, compromise, and the ability to appreciate the ability and the outlook of even those with whom we disagree. As we celebrate the satisfactions of achievements and the rewards of responsibility, we conclude with these words from the biblical psalmist: May God grant strength to those who strive to be godly people. May God bless those who strive to be godly people, with the ultimate blessing, the blessing of Shalom, of peace. Amen.

Speaker Bonnen stated that the oath of office would be administered to the lieutenant governor-elect, the Honorable Dan Patrick, by the Honorable Don R. Willett.

The Honorable Dan Patrick then took the constitutional oath of office as lieutenant governor of the State of Texas.

The Honorable John Whitmire and the Honorable Jane Nelson introduced the lieutenant governor of Texas, the Honorable Dan Patrick, who addressed the joint session and assemblage, speaking as follows:

I thought that was an Oscar moment for a second—they weren't sure who was pulling the winning name out of the envelope. I had a reason to ask both of them to introduce me today. The reason was, in Texas we're different. We work together across the aisle in a way that, quite frankly, both parties in Washington could take a note from. We work together for the people of Texas because that's what you expect us to do. The elections are over, and in two more years there will be another time to talk about the differences between the parties, but for right now and the next 140 days, you expect us to do the work of the people. This may surprise you, because you probably haven't read it in the media, but last session

we passed nearly 1,600 bills in the senate. And although we have a two-thirds majority in the senate—and some might think the republicans would roll over the democrats—out of those 1,600 bills only 23 bills were passed with only republican "yes" votes and democrat "no" votes. That's 99 percent of the bills with bipartisan support.

I want to say something briefly about Jane Nelson. I appointed her the first permanent finance chair in a session—she was the first female to lead that most powerful committee—not because she was a woman but because she was the best person for the job. And when you pass a \$220 billion budget, you have to have someone you trust, and I trust Jane Nelson with the purse strings of Texas. John Whitmire, you know this is his 48th year. I said, John, don't you believe in term limits? He said, 15. I said, well, you passed 15 a long time ago. He said, I said 15 sessions; that's 60 years, Governor. John, 12 years and you're gone. You're out of here.

Before I begin my remarks, I want to introduce my beautiful wife, Jan, a former school teacher. Please stand, Jan. My son, Ryan, U.S. Attorney, former judge. One of my five grandchildren, the oldest. The rest are four and under, so they're home with some of the parents. This is Zachary; my son-in-law, Jared, also an attorney; and my beautiful daughter, Shane, who's a speech therapist and a registered nurse. Both my kids went to Baylor, so proud of Baylor.

I also want to acknowledge two special people in the crowd I want to introduce you to. First of all, when you have an event like this, you need some extra security. So I said, you know what, could you put a Texas Ranger behind me? So I called on Cordell Walker. You know him as Chuck Norris. Stand up, Chuck. Chuck has been a longtime supporter since my first run for office, a longtime supporter of the governor. He and Gena are great Texans. They have a great youth program in our schools. They're just wonderful, wonderful people. I asked Chuck what was his favorite Chuck Norris joke. He said, well, you know, some are kind of out there, some are kind of funny, but I do like that one when the bogeyman goes to sleep at night he checks his closet to see if Chuck Norris is in there.

And then I want to introduce to you an American hero. Last year I was with him when he was inducted into the Aviation Hall of Fame—quite an honor—at the Smithsonian. He flew on Apollo 7. Fifty years ago Apollo 7 flew. For those of you who don't remember history, Apollo 1 burned on the pad, there was no Apollo 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Seven had to fly or we would not have gotten to the moon, as Kennedy envisioned, by '69. He is the surviving member now of that three man crew: Walter Cunningham. Walter, please stand. Walt and Dot are great Texans, great Americans, real heroes. They love this state, and we love them. We've known them now for about 20 years, working with the charity that Jane talked about, Be An Angel, where we raised about \$16 million for children with disabilities. They've been with us all the way, so we love them. I also want to thank Mindy Hildebrand, my chair. Mindy, please stand. Ray Hunt, the governor's chair. Please stand, Ray. Bruce Bugg, our chair. They made all this happen with private money, so no tax dollars. Thank you all, fabulous job.

Martin Luther King Jr. is said to have said—some people say it was someone else, but I'll give him the credit—a person's life begins to end the moment they become silent on things that matter. A person's life ends the moment they become silent on things that matter. That's important to me. Those of you who know me know I've not been very silent on things that matter to me and, I believe, most Texans, whether it was in my television or radio career or as a senator or lieutenant governor. The people who elected the house members here and the senate members here, they did not elect you—whether you were an incumbent coming back or a freshman—to come here and focus on the small things. They have hopes and dreams, and your actions in the next 140 days will determine whether their hopes and dreams become reality. I want my 31 senators to stand up. Please stand up. They're in the front. This is the team we go to war with—republicans and democrats.

I came to my first inauguration in 2003. I was sitting out there in the crowd like many of you are today. I didn't dream that in 2007 I would be in the next inauguration in 2008, a senator. And I surely didn't dream that two inaugurations after that, in 2015, I would be the lieutenant governor. I'm a kid from the hardscrabble streets of inner-city Baltimore, and how I got to Texas only God knows. We've been here 40 years and I am so blessed. It's such a privilege. You know I grew up in Baltimore. I fell in love with Texas when I saw Fess Parker on Walt Disney as Davy Crockett and then the John Wayne movie that I watched over and over and over as a kid. Little did I know that 55 years later I would work with members of the legislature to put \$75 million into our budget to help preserve our great Alamo. How many of you have moved to Texas like me? Hands up. Whether you're a native Texan or you moved here, I think we all get a little of the DNA of Crockett and Travis and Bowie. We love liberty. We love life. We love freedom. We don't like anyone telling us what to do, especially the government. We are unique. When we travel around the world and people say where are you from, we don't say America, we say Texas. You know, we had a church service this morning and last night. And one of the pastors said this morning—from home in baptist church in Houston—he said, you know, Dan, last year you shocked me when you said the name Jesus Christ in your speech. Well, to deny my faith in Jesus Christ would be like to deny life itself. I respect all denominations and all faiths. And I believe that the people of Texas and America would like to elect people regardless of their faith or denomination, but they would like to elect people who believe in God—than believe they are God—to office, because that gives us the foundation to represent the people. If we represent Jesus Christ and our God, we will do our job to represent you.

John and Jane came up, and most of what we do is bipartisan. I mentioned only 23 bills out of 1,600 passed from a republican vote. We have to work. We have to govern. We're the 10th largest economy in the world—\$1.6 trillion larger than that of Russia. They have Putin, and I have Abbott. We've had two great sessions. We've passed conservative budgets. We've built the reserve fund. We've protected life, the Second Amendment, and religious liberty. Sam Houston said a leader is someone who makes the lives of people better or the system they live under better. And I will say to our senators and our house members, that is our

job this session and every session. I believe with the bipartisanship we now have and the teamwork we have between the senate and the house, this is going to be the greatest session ever in the history of Texas.

I want to bring up, and this is unprecedented, he's not a statewide-elected official, but he has the power like a statewide-elected official—Dennis Bonnen, the new speaker of the house. Dennis, come up here. From the moment you elected him speaker, the governor and myself said we're there to help you be successful. That's our mission—to work together with the house. Last week, something happened that I only dreamed about in the past. The three of us would come forward at a press conference and lay out a vision for Texas. At the governor's mansion, the governor, Dennis, and myself said, we are united to work for the people of Texas on three big issues the people told the governor and myself as we crisscrossed the state. We already knew in our heart and our soul what people wanted us to do, but we heard it loudly and clearly—and that was reform property taxes so they can live in their homes and own their businesses, freeze taxes for seniors 65 and over so they don't have to rent their home from the government, give teachers a pay raise they've deserved for a long time, and reform education, and reform school finance and Robin Hood. The border is important; transportation is important; health care is important—but the three issues that we talked about last week that we're going to focus on is property tax reform, school finance reform, and teacher pay.

I'm happy to say to you today that one hour ago Senator Jane Nelson just filed the bill, **SB 3**, to give every teacher in the State of Texas—all 350,000—an across-the-board \$5,000 raise starting next year and continuing into the next year and continuing into perpetuity. In about an hour she will file her budget, and in that budget that raise will be paid for with \$3.7 billion of new funding to education—first to teachers, because next to the parent, there's no one more important than the schoolteacher. That's the first step in raising those salaries up to \$10,000, along with other programs in schools we're going to fund so they can create incentive programs, extra programs for teachers to make money. We have to put our teachers first. We have six million kids in Texas in school. The future of Texas depends on their education. I don't care how much money we spend on a building or how much money we spend on a system or how many computers we have. If you don't have that great teacher there with that student, teaching that student, you will not have a successful outcome. We're putting teachers first this session. It's been 20 years since they've had an across-the-board raise.

We are at a point of great divide in our country. Passions run deep. Rhetoric is sometimes not what it should be. But here in Texas, we can lead to show the nation the way of how we work within our parties—because we don't always agree, republicans and republicans or democrats and democrats—and across party lines to do what you expect us to do. Remember what Martin Luther King Jr. said, a person's life begins to end the moment they stay silent on things that matter. We cannot stay silent on things that matter. We have to lead. We have to make this the greatest place on earth, which I think we all believe it is now. But

we have challenges. We're a fast-growing state. We've added 10 million people in the last 18 years, we'll add another 15 million in the next 20 years. So we need serious people to make tough decisions, to be courageous.

Abraham Lincoln said about courage and character that almost any man can stand adversity, but if you want to see a person's true character, give them power. Well, to the 181 members of the legislature, in both parties, in both chambers, you now have the power. You didn't run for office to go quietly in the night. I have a saying: I didn't come this far to only come this far. The prize is not winning. Winning the election and being here today is just the beginning. I'm going to do my part working with the speaker, working with the governor. We have this small window in time to set the stage for future generations. The challenges are tough. The decisions will be tough. The solutions are not easy. It will cost billions, and we can only spend what we have. But we must get us on the path to an even greater Texas than we are today. Thank you for this great honor. I am so blessed. I am so fortunate. I love Texas. I love America. I love my family. I love my Lord. And I love this state. God bless all of you.

At the conclusion of the lieutenant governor's address, Speaker Bonnen stated that the oath of office would be administered to the governor-elect, the Honorable Greg Abbott, by the Honorable Nathan L. Hecht, chief justice of the Supreme Court of Texas.

The Honorable Greg Abbott took the constitutional oath of office as governor of the State of Texas followed by a 19-gun salute.

Speaker Bonnen introduced the governor of Texas, the Honorable Greg Abbott, who addressed the joint session and assemblage, speaking as follows:

It's an honor to take the oath as governor of the greatest state in the United States of America. We gather today for far more than just an inauguration. Today is the dawn of a transformative session that will usher in a new era—a new era for our students, for our teachers, and for our taxpayers. This will happen because of my partners here today. Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, Speaker Dennis Bonnen, and all of the members of the Texas Senate and the Texas House—we are going to get this done. And it is a blessing to embark upon this mission with my lovely wife, Cecilia, by my side. A fabulous mother of our daughter, Audrey, Cecilia is a powerful advocate for Texas, and she herself made history as the first Hispanic first lady in the history of our great state.

Now, I can't let this moment pass without first thanking our very large and diverse family. Especially, I want to thank my father-in-law, Bill Phalen, for being with us here today. Unfortunately, health prevents the most famous mother-in-law in Texas, mi suegra, Maria de la luz Segura, from joining us here today. I ask that you keep her health in your prayers tonight. I also want to thank my brother, Gary, and his wife, Denise. Gary is a retired commander from the United States Navy. He served our nation for 20 years. We must never forget that we have the freedom to build a better Texas only because of the men and women who have served in our United States military. If there is anyone among us who has ever worn the uniform of the United States military, will you please stand or wave your hand so we can thank you for your service to our country.

Now, some people say that Texas is at an apex. They rightfully point to the fact that more Texans have jobs today than ever before. In fact, Texans created almost a million jobs over the past four years, and we set record lows in unemployment. Texas remains the unrivaled national leader in agriculture, in energy, and in exports, and we dominate fields like health care, technology, and finance. The fact is that the Texas brand of opportunity attracts more of our fellow Americans to the Lone Star State than any other state in the country. Well, despite the exceptional heights to which Texas has risen, I believe we have only climbed to the foothills of what we can become. I know that we can do even more for our fellow Texans—more to educate the next generation of students and to keep them safe at school. We can do more to advance our universities to meet the changes sweeping the 21st century, more to rein in a property tax system that is a burden on our citizens, more to help our coastal region become resilient to catastrophic storms, more to crack down on human trafficking and the dangerous gangs promoting it. All of this we can do. All of this we must do, because we live in the greatest state in America, and we have an obligation to make it even better.

Now, no doubt, Texas has reached an unrivaled economic summit. But from that lofty perch, it's clear that too many young Texans are having difficulty on their own journey to prosperity. Holding them back is an education system that is not adequate. It is not adequate to put our students on the path to excellence that they deserve. Yes, we have more students graduating from high school than ever before. But at the same time, more students are graduating ill prepared for either college or a career. Our students deserve better. Our teachers deserve better. Our taxpayers deserve better. It is time for Texas to deliver on real education reform in Texas. And the good news is that we don't have to look far for solutions. Two years ago, Titche Elementary was one of the worst schools in Dallas. A year later, all of that has changed. And get this: Out of 145 elementary schools in Dallas, Titche was rated near the bottom, ranked 132nd. In a year, it rose from being ranked 132nd all the way to being the second best elementary school in Dallas. Five years ago, the Dallas Independent School District had 43 failing campuses. Today, they have just four. And behavior is better. At Titche Elementary, for example, school suspensions have dropped by almost 90 percent. So what changed? Well, a new principal was hired, and he brought in highly rated teachers and set clear standards for the students. He added people and policies that improved student success.

Well, know this—Titche Elementary is not an isolated example. Other districts in Texas, like in San Antonio, in Lubbock, in Pharr-San Juan—they've all achieved similar results using similar strategies. These achievements were possible because of bold leadership—bold leadership by superintendents, by school boards who broke the mold making tough decisions to prioritize student achievement. We must ensure that destiny is not determined by zip code. Students from the most challenging circumstances have proven that they can perform at the very highest levels, but we have the obligation to give them the opportunity to do so. But understand this—success like this is not going to be achieved just by spending more money. It will be achieved by recruiting and retaining educators who deliver better outcomes for our students.

So today, we must dedicate ourselves to making our schools better—better than they have ever been. This session, we must act—as the lieutenant governor has already taken a step—to pay our teachers more. We must reward teachers and school districts that achieve these results. We must prioritize spending in the classroom. We must shore up the Teacher Retirement System. And yes, the state must invest more in public education. The eyes of Texas are upon us. We have the opportunity and the obligation to get this right. We can and we will better fund education in Texas. We will pay our teachers more and reward achievement in the classroom. We will reform a school finance system that robs from one district to pay another district. We will put our students on a pathway to having all third graders reading at grade level by the time they finish the third grade. We will prepare our high school students for either college or career, and we are going to do all of this without a court order telling us to do it. I want to make this very clear. We're going to do this session what no one thinks we are capable of achieving. We will finally fix school finance in Texas.

So while one generation is struggling to climb the ladder of success, others have a ceiling on how high they can go, a ceiling imposed by an archaic property tax system, a system that punishes families, punishes businesses, and prevents younger Texans from being able to achieve their dream of home ownership. Think about this. Just a few blocks from where we are right now, you see cranes operating above sprouting skyscrapers. In the shadow of those cranes are businesses that are shuttering, unable to keep up with skyrocketing property taxes. Go a few blocks farther and you'll find residents who are being forced out of their homes, victims of unaffordable housing, a by-product of those same skyrocketing property taxes. This is not what Texas is all about. Texas is a place of hope and opportunity where anyone has the ability to achieve their dreams if they're willing to work hard. But that promise that Texas offers is threatened by out of control property taxes.

As you all know, the property tax system challenges are not unique to Austin. I've talked to people from Laredo to Amarillo. I've talked to people in suburbs as well as in inner cities. And they all demand property tax reform in Texas. As a woman from Waco recently told me, she said, "Governor, something has to be done. Some homeowners in the poorest areas of Waco had their home values doubled by the appraisal district." She asked, "How is that honest or fair?" The answer: It's not. So this session, we must finally rein in skyrocketing property taxes in Texas. Now, some people say we can't afford property tax reform. I say we can't afford not to reform a system that punishes homeowners, crushes businesses, and cripples our schools. Listen, a state as prosperous as Texas shouldn't punish seniors who've worked their entire lives to retire in a home that they've already paid off. And it shouldn't force middle or lower income Texans out of the neighborhoods that they cherish. To fix this, Texas must limit the ability of taxing authorities to raise your taxes. At the same time, Texas must end unfunded mandates on cities and counties. And taxpayers should be given the power to fire their tax appraiser.

Some cynics say that we can't solve these intractable problems. They're too expensive, too complex, too political, too hard. The cynics forget the legendary Texan resolve—the resolve of heroes who fought for Texas liberty while remembering the Alamo. Well, that resolve has been passed from one generation of Texans to another generation, through oil booms and oil busts, through dust bowls and devastating floods, through windstorms and billowing fires. From moments of triumph to horrors of tragedy, generation after generation, Texans have been tested, and Texans have always prevailed. We live in a state where Texans have always tapped into their trademark resilience and ingenuity to rise above our challenges. We live in a state where the grandson of a slave who was sold on the courthouse steps in Waco rose up to be chief justice of our highest court here in Texas. We live in a state where a little girl was shuffled from foster home to foster home but drew strength from being raised by her grandmother in Houston—she went on to become the first American woman gymnast to win four gold medals in a single Olympics. And yes, we live in a state where a young man can have his back broken in half and still rise up and become governor of this great state. We will muster that same resolve, that same ingenuity, to tackle the challenges of our time. And we are going to prevail this session.

Together, we are going to pay our teachers more. Together, we will provide a better education for our students. We will make our schools safer for those students. We will tackle skyrocketing property taxes. We will help Texans recover from storms that have ravaged our communities. We will do this and more. Working together, we will ensure that every generation reaches their mountaintop. And together, we're going to keep Texas the greatest state in America. God bless you all, and God bless the great State of Texas.

Speaker Bonnen introduced the Most Reverend Michael F. Olson, bishop, Diocese of Fort Worth, Fort Worth, who offered the inaugural blessing as follows:

Blessed are you, gracious God, source of all that is true and good and beautiful, you who delight in all people. We stand in awe before you, believing that the spark of life within each person on earth is the spark of your divine presence. Through your goodness to us, we live in this great State of Texas—some of us born and nurtured here by your grace and wisdom, some of us called from afar and delivered here through your mercy and providence, each and all of us sustained here together in fellowship and solidarity by your justice and love. We give you thanks for the lives of our governor and lieutenant governor and of all of our elected officials. We thank you for their generosity and willingness and that of their families as they offer themselves in public service. May you bless them generously for their selflessness of spirit. Bless us, as one people, with the fortitude to seek the common good for all members of our towns and cities, of our counties and state, of our nation, and of our world. Deliver us, as one people, from selfishness and distrust that would foment fear and incite violence within our homes and in our communities. Protect us from all who would do us harm through lawlessness and violence. Instill in us, as one people, your spirit of integrity that we might do our part in diligently exercising our own personal responsibility for the betterment of our society.

Bendicenos, como un solo pueblo, con el deseo de libertad y de justicia auténticas promovidas por el amor al prójimo, y protegida por el estado de derecho. Libranos, como un solo pueblo, de la apatía y el cinismo que nos dividen, y ahuyenta a las sombras del aislamiento y la apatía moral. Inculca en nosotros, como un solo pueblo, el espíritu de la compasión que no se incomoda por el cuidado de cada persona humana en su realidad social, y no ve la humanidad en el abstracto y en el vacío del idealismo.

Gracious God, we entrust to you our governor and our lieutenant governor, our legislators, and our judges. Bless them, as our public servants, in their responsibilities of government with the fortitude to be humble in their sincere commitment to the unity of action required for the promotion of a just social order. Keep them in sound health in mind and in body. Deliver them, as our public servants, from temptation to sin in any way that would do damage to our development as one people in fellowship and solidarity. Instill in them, as our public servants, a spirit of confidence that they might lead us in deed as well as in word in the direction set forth, led by your guidance, for a better society marked by the dignity of human flourishing and concern for our neighbor, for the poor, and for those who live in the margins of our society. Bless them with wisdom and right judgment that they might, through their decisions, strengthen our state in the present moment with an eye toward future development and peace for generations yet to come. Deliver our public servants from impatience with the complexities of government. Instill in them your virtue of prudence that they might see, judge, and act within the proper balance of eternal values and present needs for the sake of your peace. And we ask all of this with confidence in your name. Amen.

Speaker Bonnen presented the Texas A&M University Singing Cadets who sang "Who Are the Brave."

Speaker Bonnen introduced Dr. Terry M. Turner, pastor, Mesquite Friendship Baptist Church, Mesquite, who pronounced the benediction as follows:

Most holy and eternal Father, we are grateful, thankful, for these godly men that you've given to this State of Texas to lead us, to guide us, to direct us. We ask, Father, that you would bless them in your very own special way. Give them wisdom by the power of the Holy Spirit, that all that they do will be pleasing in your sight. We thank you for their service. We thank you for their commitment. And we thank you that we recognize today that all authority has been ordained by you. And we recognize today that you have put them in place. We love you for what you've done in their lives, and we thank you for what you're doing through them in the State of Texas. In the name of Jesus.

And now, if you'll stretch your hands toward our governor and our lieutenant governor, we will give the benediction: Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before a storm of glory with exceeding joy; to the all wise God be glory and dominion, both now and forever. (Jude 1:24-25) And everybody said, Amen.

Speaker Bonnen extended an invitation, on behalf of Governor Abbott and Lieutenant Governor Patrick, to all guests to the remaining inaugural festivities on the Capitol grounds.

### **SENATE ADJOURNMENT**

At 12:17 p.m., President Pro Tempore Watson stated that the purpose for which the joint session was convened had been completed and the senate would, in accordance to a previous motion, stand adjourned until 11 a.m. tomorrow.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Speaker Bonnen stated that the purpose for which the joint session was convened had been completed. In accordance with a previous motion, the house, at 12:17 p.m., adjourned until 11 a.m. tomorrow.