HOUSE JOURNAL

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of the

EIGHTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE

January 8, 2013

through

May 27, 2013
CAPITOL PHYSICIAN

The speaker presented Dr. Troy Fiesinger of Sugar Land as the "Doctor for the Day."

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

The speaker recognized members of the choral ensemble, Conspirare, who sang "Texas, Our Texas."

The benediction was offered by Dr. Kie Bowman, Hyde Park Baptist Church, Austin.

ADDRESS BY THE GOVERNOR

Speaker Straus recognized Representative Dutton who introduced the Honorable Rick Perry, governor of the State of Texas, who addressed the house, speaking as follows:

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

Again, all good news, and a complete change from the forecast we faced just two years ago. At that time, we were still dealing with the effects of an ugly national recession, and much of the talk, both in the newspapers and around town, surrounded not whether we'd have to raise taxes, but how much we'd have to raise them to keep our state afloat.

As you all know, that's not the path we chose. We chose the responsible path, the fiscally-conservative path, and that path has led us here today. We sat down, separated our wants from our needs, prioritized, and tightened our belts, wherever necessary, and wherever possible. Far from the catastrophe many predicted for us at the time, that approach helped our economy improve more quickly, and more profoundly, than many had expected. The main lesson to draw from that story is simple: When people keep more of their own money it's better for them, it's better for their families, and it's better for the state. That's a lesson we must take to heart as we begin the 83rd Legislature.

Trust me when I tell you that there are interests all across this state who view Monday's revenue estimate as the equivalent of ringing a dinner bell. They all want more for their causes, they all figure we have money pouring out of our ears now, and they all have your address and phone number. However, in the face of that kind of pressure, we have to remember that Monday's revenue estimate represents not a chance to spend freely, but an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the very policies that have made Texas economically strong in the first place.

It's also a chance to put our fiscal house in order for the years to come. That's why, over the past several months, I have called for major budgetary reforms that include reducing diversions, a stricter constitutional limit on spending, a renewed commitment to stopping any and all new taxes or tax increases, and stopping any
attempt to raid the rainy day fund for ongoing expenses. For the sake of all Texas taxpayers, we must control the appetite for more spending. We need to stop writing IOUs to the next budget and delaying payments we know will come due. We need to reduce the use of fees and dedicated accounts for anything other than the purpose for which the fees were collected, and if we’re not going to use them in the way proposed, stop collecting them. With a better budgetary picture, now is the time to set the books straight and improve the fiscal outlook for future legislatures.

It’s also time to take a hard look at providing tax relief. We need to ensure consumers and employers alike have more cash on hand to pay their bills, hire more people, and invest in new efforts. We need to reduce the demands on our innovators so they’re free to innovate and able to turn their great ideas into great success. We need to continue streamlining our government, do more with the resources we have available, and continue delivering needed services in an effective and efficient manner.

Of course, budgetary issues aren’t all you will be tasked with. We must deal with infrastructure needs in water, energy, and transportation, both for now and stretching into the future. We need to find the right ways to educate our workforce, whether that means a college degree or technical certification, so employers can continue to count on finding the best and brightest here in Texas. We need to reform our laws to make it harder for people to abuse our public assistance and unemployment insurance systems by authorizing drug screenings for those programs. We also need to better protect our most vulnerable citizens, the unborn, by expanding the ban on abortion to any baby that can feel the pain of the procedure and putting in place common-sense oversights on clinics and physicians involved.

These are just a few of the issues we’ll address this session, and I look forward to working with Lieutenant Governor Dewhurst and each of you in doing the people’s business over the next 140 days. At the end of the day, I’m certain you’ll work together in the best interest of our state and merit the faith placed in you by the millions of Texans who put you here.

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

Representative Geren moved that staff members employed by house committees at the end of the 82nd Legislature continue to be employed by the house subject to available funding until all committee assignments have been made for the 83rd Legislature.

The motion prevailed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Representative Craddick moved that the house adjourn until 10 a.m. tomorrow in memory of the Honorable Ken Legler, the Honorable A. M. "Bob" Aikin III, the Honorable Thomas M. "Tom" Andrews, the Honorable Maurice Angly, Jr., the Honorable Robert Avant, the Honorable Scott J. Bailey, the Honorable Fred Blair, the Honorable R. Paul Brashear, the Honorable Jack Brooks, the Honorable Hiriam Childress, the Honorable Anne Cooper, the