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Policy institute losing its president

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Just as a San Antonio think tank appeared ready to increase its influence at the Legislature, its president and CEO, Jeff Judson, is resigning.

Wendy Gramm, chairwoman of the Texas Public Policy Foundation's board of directors, said Judson is leaving effective Dec. 31.

Just last week, Gov. Rick Perry, Lt. Gov.-elect David Dewhurst and Speaker-apparent Tom Craddick endorsed the think tank's four-day legislative conference, planned for Jan. 29 and 30 and Feb. 3 and 4. The rare endorsement is a coup for the public policy foundation, founded and financed by one of the Republican Party's biggest donors, James Leininiger of San Antonio.

Gramm, the wife of former U.S. Sen. Phil Gramm, disclosed Judson's departure in response to questions about the CEO's status. In her written statement, Gramm said Judson told board members six months ago that he would be leaving for work in the private sector. The statement did not identify where Judson would be working.

Gramm said the think tank is looking for a replacement and expects an announcement in "coming weeks." She said Judson's departure would not sidetrack the orientation for legislators.