

Tightening the state budget

House Must Hold Line on State Spending

...Just like Texans, government must tighten belt in tough times.

Saying the time has come for campaign promises to become legislative reality, the president of the Texas Public Policy Foundation joined with other conservative leaders in praising the House leadership for holding the line on spending.

"Texans have a healthy suspicion of politicians, but hopefully this Legislature is going to prove the chattering heads wrong by holding the line on spending, resisting calls for easy tax spikes, and setting clear priorities for the future," said the Foundation's Brooke Leslie Rollins at a press conference on Wednesday. She was joined by the leaders of Texas Citizens for a Sound Economy, Texas Women's Alliance, Texas Citizen Action Network, National Federation of Independent Business, Texas Conservative Coalition, and the Texas Association of Business.

According to State Representative Wayne Christian (R-Center), spending by the state is something we must look at very closely in years when money is available as well as when money is tight.

"During the boom years, our spending habits went wild. That is not to say we weren't spending money on worth while projects, because obviously we were, but that we were negligent with our tax dollars," Christian said.

"Now that the boom is over, we are in serious financial trouble that should have been avoided by legislatures of the past. We will now do everything possible to ensure funding for government programs and especially education."

"Since 1978 the Texas budget has grown more than 600 percent. Even over the last decade, we have

125 percent," noted Rollins. The Texas Public Policy Foundation is the state's only free-market think tank.

"Our legislators in the House could have taken the politically easy route and pushed for more spending and higher taxes, then blamed it on circumstances or politics. But they have done the right thing by Texas families: forcing government to live within its means, not on the backs of hard-working men and women."

Rollins said the House's budget-writing Appropriations Committee, chaired by Rep. Talmadge Heflin (R-Houston), has shown the same initiative most families have had to demonstrate when dealing with rough times.

"Rather than go for gimmicks or quick fixes, Mr. Heflin and his colleagues have worked to save the taxpayers money by finding

ways to eliminate waste and re-prioritize spending.

Contrary to the beliefs of some, Texas government simply cannot be all things to all people."

Even though deliberation

is expected to continue in the House throughout the week, rules require that the total budget cannot be increased on the House floor. After the budget passes the House, it will go to the Texas Senate.

"The time has come for Texas lawmakers to get serious about strictly limiting the political impulse to simply spend ever-increasing taxpayer dollars. We should be proud that the leadership of the Texas House has risen to the occasion and ignored the naysayers and doom-and-gloom crowd. The Texas economy, and all Texans, will prosper as we keep the cost of government low."



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