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## Budget process proves Texas skeptics wrong

While Texans were understandably suspicious of claims that state legislators could balance the budget without a tax hike or undue cuts to essential services, lawmakers did just that recently, said Brooke Rollins, the president of the Texas Public Policy Foundation.

Budget conferees finished work on the 2004-05 budget after a conference that included the intervention of Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst.

"Texans are applauding state leaders who came to Austin on the promise that services could be delivered, a \$10 billion shortfall overcome, and the state's economic competitiveness be enhanced without raising taxes," said Rollins. "Texas voters said loud and clear they wanted to hold the line on taxes and tighten the state's belt. Naysayers on the editorial pages and other proponents of high taxes said it could not be done, but just as Texas families have managed to reduce their spending in tough times, so have our leaders."

The foundation has main-

tained for more than a decade that through sound research and principled economic analysis substantial savings can result from simply demanding greater efficiency from state government.

"Governor Perry set the tone early by requiring a zero-based budget. House Appropriations Chairman Heflin meticulously shepherded the process in conjunction with Senate Finance Chairman Bivins. In the end, Speaker Craddick and Lt. Gov. Dewhurst coached the budget across the finish line. This team has shown Texans can expect high standards without high costs," said Rollins.

Rollins concluded, "In the end, nearly every member of the Texas House and Senate was an integral part of this solution to our budget challenge; they should be greeted with a hero's welcome by taxpayers when they return home next week. The 78th Legislature has proven that responsible budgeting doesn't mean raising taxes, but rather controlling spending."