

The Quorum Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: APRIL 19, 2005

Taxes, TML, Homeland Security and even tobacco

TML: POLL FINDS TEXANS OPPOSE STATE CONTROL OF LOCAL BUDGET DECISIONS -

- "A statewide poll of registered voters found 79 percent of Texans believe city and county tax rates should be controlled by locally elected officials and not the state legislature. *Texas Municipal League* Executive Director **Frank Sturzl** said the poll results clearly show a [lack of public support](#) for proposed legislation to restrict city and county property tax revenue growth to three percent per year. "Local officials, not legislators, should make decisions on the services each community wants and needs, as well as the decisions on how to pay for those services," Sturzl said. "And Texans already have the power to hold local officials responsible for the decisions they make."

TPPF: BRING TRUTH TO TAXES -- WHAT CITIES, COUNTIES DON'T WANT YOU TO

KNOW -- "The truth shall set you free." Familiar words. Easy concept. Unless you happen to be a taxpayer in Texas. Lobbyists hired by city and county elected officials - through the *Texas Municipal League* and the *Texas Association of Counties* - are working hard to [keep you from knowing](#) and acting on the painful truth of taxes.

CPPP: STATEMENT OF F. SCOTT MCCOWN, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES ON HOUSE VERSION OF SB6:

"Our concern is privatization of case management, meaning that all the state's case oversight duties, including legal duties, are turned over to private companies, the same private companies providing the care and services to the children and their families. A key reason the House gives for the privatization of foster care, which we do not oppose, is the state's [conflict of interest](#) in both providing care and oversight. Yet the House plan to privatize case management creates a much more serious conflict of interest by turning children over to private companies who provide both the case management and foster care."

TEXAS FREEDOM NETWORK -- HOUSE BILL GIVES STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION A FREE HAND TO CENSOR TEXTBOOKS:

"Legislation before the *House Public Education Committee* today is a gift to *State Board of Education (SBOE)* members who want to censor textbook content based on their personal beliefs, the president of the Texas Freedom Network said today. "Giving a politically charged and ideological body like the State Board of Education a [free hand](#) in deciding what goes into and what comes out of textbooks would be irresponsible and outrageous," TFN President **Kathy Miller** said. "The 'facts' our children would learn would change with the majority that controlled the board at any given time."

EDUCATION REFORM BILL SHOULD INCLUDE TEACHER INCENTIVE PAY: "With the Senate Education Committee preparing to vote on House Bill 2, major education reform legislation, the *Texas Education Reform Caucus (TERC)* is [urging](#) the committee to retain the provision that would reward teachers' success with financial bonuses. Under this provision, teachers would be recognized for increasing student achievement and for scoring well on other measures such as evaluations and teachers' comments. The provision was included in the bill as passed by the Texas House of Representatives. The bill now is under consideration by the Senate Education Committee, scheduled to vote on the bill as early as this week.

LT. GOV. DEWHURST SUPPORTS HOMELAND SECURITY BILL: "Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst [applauded](#) the Senate for passing SB 9 today, a bill that will strengthen Texas' ability to detect, deter, and respond to threats of terrorism. SB 11, sponsored by **Sen. Todd Staples (R-Palestine)**, works to enhance the state's current homeland security program through stepped-up efforts to protect public health, agricultural crops and livestock, drinking water, and critical infrastructure.

FROM AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY ON PHILIP MORRIS RADIO ADS: **Big Tobacco:** For half a century they [misled the public](#), denying smoking is harmful. Now they're attacking the Legislature to avoid losing their profit margin to a tobacco tax increase. The legislation will provide the council with more investigatory tools to get to the root of problems plaguing our criminal justice system. **Barry Scheck**, renowned attorney and head of the New York-based Innocence Project, will testify that Texas needs to do much more to improve our criminal justice system. He will highlight two cases where faulty evidence may have led to wrongful executions.

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