



Senator Eliot Shapleigh

District 29

Press Release



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For Immediate Release

January 23, 2009

SENATOR SHAPLEIGH TAKES UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND STUDENTS ON TOUR OF FRANKLIN MOUNTAINS, SHARES IMMIGRATION HISTORY

Franklin D. Roosevelt once said: "Remember, remember always that all of us ... are descended from immigrants and revolutionists. We are all immigrants and there is no reason to violate the human rights of any, whether documented or not."

On **Friday, January 23, 2009**, Senator Shapleigh (D-El Paso) hosted a group of students from the University of Maryland on an early-morning hike through the Franklin Mountains.

The group of 15 students have been visiting El Paso as part of an alternative 10-day long winter break program focusing on immigration, homeland security and border issues. During their stay in El Paso, the group has also visited with the Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center, ACORN, the Border Network for Human Rights and Border Patrol offices in El Paso, among other locations.

This morning's hike with Senator Shapleigh began at the base of the mountain off Transmountain Road. During the hike, the Senator informed students about the Paso del Norte region's history, culture, geology and ecology, as well as current political discussions about immigration, border security and bi-national transportation and trade.

As Franklin D. Roosevelt once said: "Remember, remember always that all of us ... are descended from immigrants and revolutionists. We are all immigrants and there is no reason to violate the human rights of any, whether documented or not."

"I'm really learning that I need to understand more about the government so I can work with the government to make this a better place," said Cristina Sciuto, a public health and romance language double major at UMD. "I really see now that I can make a difference and we can make a difference."

During the hike, Senator Shapleigh invited student Sana Javed, a senior government and Spanish double major at UMD, to also speak about her experience on La Voz radio KXPL 1060 AM.

"The people of El Paso have been amazing. It's been a great city and we love it," Javed said. "When you meet the people and you talk to them, it's so different, and it's so fresh and it's so real to see what their perspectives are and really to see the humanity of the entire issue of immigration and border security."



Senator Eliot Shapleigh (D-El Paso) and students from the University of Maryland before their hike in the Franklin Mountains

"Early on, President Obama should resolve immigration issues. Our nation needs fair and comprehensive immigration reform now to resolve challenges ahead on homeland security, trade and labor," Senator Shapleigh said.

This pilot program at the University of Maryland was largely student-run and designed. All the students personally funded their own travel and expenses.

The group returns to Maryland tomorrow morning to resume classes next week.

Senator Shapleigh routinely takes El Paso high school and college student groups on hikes in the Franklin Mountains as part of his "Rise and Shine" program. For more information on this program, contact Sarah Enriquez in Senator Shapleigh's office at 915-544-1990 or by email at sarah.enriquez@senate.state.tx.us.

For more information on the University of Maryland's program, please contact the university's Office of Campus Programs at 301-314-2273, or contact UMD student Mara James in El Paso at 410-236-7971.

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