



# Senator Eliot Shapleigh

District 29

## Texas Press Release

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### For Immediate Release

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## "THE COST OF LAST"

*"Texas is not globally competitive. If we do not change course, for the first time in our history, the Texas generation of tomorrow will be less prosperous than the generation of today."*

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**AUSTIN** - Today, Senator Eliot Shapleigh offers the following statement on [S.B. 1](#), the state budget for the next biennium:

Since 1836, Texas has stood as an icon of the American dream.

Blessed with land, rivers, oil, and other abundant natural resources, early Texas welcomed everyone from cattle ranchers to braceros, from cotton farmers to Chinese railroad workers. These pioneers built a great state, and together we fulfilled a destiny.

From humble beginnings, we built a state with the firm belief that every Texan might rise as high and as far as their spirit, hard work, and talent might carry them. With education and determination every Texan might achieve great success – home ownership, reliable healthcare, safe neighborhoods, and financial prosperity.

In Texas today, [the American dream is distant](#). Texas has the [highest percentage of uninsured children](#) in the nation. Texas is dead last in the [percentage of residents with their high school diploma](#) and [near last in SAT scores](#). Texas is 49th in average teacher salary as a percentage of annual pay. If we do not change course, for the first time in our history, the Texas generation of tomorrow will be less prosperous than the generation of today.

Without the courage to invest in the minds of our children, and steadfast support for great schools, we face a daunting prospect. Those who value tax cuts over children and budget cuts over college have put Texas at risk in her ability to compete and succeed.

As a state, we invest less in our own citizens than nearly any other state in America. What's the cost of being last?

- More -

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Here's what the Governor's [Select Commission on Higher Education and Global Competitiveness](#) recently said about our state's competitiveness in the world:

*"Texas is not globally competitive. The state faces a downward spiral in both quality of life and economic competitiveness if it fails to educate more of its growing population (both young and adults) to higher levels of attainment, knowledge and skills. The rate at which educational capital is currently being developed is woefully inadequate."*

Steve Murdoch, Texas' former official demographer, [bluntly stated](#) that if Texas does not change course in improving and increasing education, Texas will be poorer and less competitive in the future than it is today. Murdoch said, *"In 2000 constant dollars, the average Texas household in 2040—if you didn't change anything—would be \$6,500 poorer in 2000 constant dollars than the average household in 2000 was."*

Simply put, in a 21st Century world, where knowledge creates prosperity, the cost of last is too high. We can no longer afford to be [dead last](#).

Today's budget, [S.B. 1](#), makes a clear moral choice: tax cuts over kids. [S.B. 1](#) reflects values and morals we must change in order to succeed. Texas deserves better leadership, a better budget and a brighter future.

- End -

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