



PRESS RELEASE

EL PASO STATE LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION

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EL PASO STATE DELEGATION ANNOUNCES CONSENSUS AGENDA FOR 81ST LEGISLATIVE SESSION

El Paso – The El Paso Legislative Delegation today announced a plan for the upcoming Regular Session of the 81st Legislature. Each delegation member pledged to focus on these agenda items to get the job done for El Paso. While each member of the delegation will carry several legislative items not on this plan, each member emphasized that this plan is a consensus agenda.

For the seventh-straight session, the El Paso delegation is the only urban delegation to announce a consensus agenda. The delegation will again meet on a weekly basis during the session to move El Paso's agenda and get the job done.

Sen. Shapleigh said, "Our delegation has been the only one in the state to set a clear agenda for our community. By working together, by setting clear goals, we move El Paso's agenda in Austin."

"I love El Paso and look forward to working together with Senator Shapleigh and the House Delegation to take care of our constituents," Sen. Uresti said.

Rep. Pickett said, "It's an agenda that builds on past successes, brings more attention to one of our biggest assets, UTEP, and realizes that we need support for the growth at Fort Bliss."

"El Paso's legislative agenda will move forward to continue efforts for permanent funding of the Texas Tech Medical School, and we will have legislative strategies to open Speaking Rock Casino this session," said Rep. Chavez.

"With the advent of a new Speaker of the House, the El Paso Delegation will inherit more clout and will have more opportunities to further advance the delegation priorities that are being highlighted this morning," Rep. Quintanilla said. "The medical school funding should be our number one priority, along with gambling for the Tiguas. CHIP and Medicaid should be a major concern for us as a delegation. School funding is of the upmost importance to our children in El Paso County. It is imperative that we work hard to accomplish our priorities as a delegation and make El Paso County a better place for all our citizens and the citizens of Texas."

"I am extremely confident that this delegation has listened carefully to the needs in our respective communities and that our 2009 legislative priorities are a direct reflection of this," Rep.-elect Marquez said. "Now the work begins."

"With the unity of our delegation we will be able to move El Paso and Texas forward. I look forward to strengthening UTEP, Texas Tech and Fort Bliss in the coming 81st Legislative Session," said Rep.-elect Moody.

The top priority for the delegation is guaranteeing UTEP participation in Tier One formula funding.

The plan announced today also includes the following key items:

- Texas Tech Medical School - fund \$48 million base budget for new medical school
- Texas Tech Medical School - fund \$17 million for new clinical faculty
- Tiguas - restore Tigua gaming in El Paso
- Ft. Bliss/BRAC—recruit and retain new health professionals for 67,000 new troops and dependents
- Increase funding to Texas mental health system; support El Paso state center
- Reform Central Appraisal District governance structure, appraisal process, appeal process, accountability and transparency to the public
- Improve public education funding formulas regarding basic funding elements
- Increase funding for CHIP program

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