



Senator Eliot Shapleigh

District 29

Texas Press Release



Contact:
Claudia Ordaz
(915) 544-1990
Claudia.ordaz@senate.state.tx.us

For Immediate Release

August 13, 2009

" MURDOCK'S PROPHESY "

"If the current relationships between minority status and educational attainment, occupations of employment, and wage and salary income do not change in the future from those existing in 1990, the future workforce of Texas will be less educated, more likely to be employed in lower-level state occupations, and earning lower wages and salaries than the present workforce."

When Dr. Steve Murdock, Texas' former state demographer, went to D.C. to head the Census Bureau, he left behind an honest—and startling—picture of Texas' future.

"If the current relationships between minority status and educational attainment, occupations of employment, and wage and salary income do not change in the future from those existing in 1990, the future workforce of Texas will be less educated, more likely to be employed in lower-level state occupations, and earning lower wages and salaries than the present workforce."

Such a dramatic change, Murdock predicts, will result in the average household income dropping over \$4,700 from 2010 to 2040. In other words, for the first time in Texas history the generation of tomorrow will be less prosperous than the generation of today. Rick Perry, unfortunately, appears to be treating Murdock's prophesy as a blueprint rather than a warning.

In July, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the state agency responsible for coordinating Texas' institutions of higher education, released a report showing that Hispanic enrollment at colleges and universities in Texas would need to almost double by 2015 to meet the state's higher education goals. Aimed at ensuring "the future well-being of the state," the Coordinating Board outlined in 2000 the future goals of Texas higher education in a report titled '[Closing the Gaps](#)'. The [July update](#), however, shows that an additional 310,000 Hispanic students would need to enroll to reach the 2015 goal, calling that "a daunting task given their high dropout rates in high school and economic disadvantages."

- More -

800 WYOMING AVE., SUITE A • EL PASO, TEXAS 79902

(800) 544-1990 • (915) 544-1990

Despite the need for increased participation rates in higher education, Rick Perry's response in 2003 to fixing a budget deficit was to hike college tuition. Tuition deregulation—allowing the individual institutions to set their rates of tuition, rather than the Legislature—has resulted in skyrocketing prices. Tuition at UTEP, for example, has increased 73 percent from 2003 to 2009.

What about public education? In December 2008, a [federal district court ruled](#) that Texas' bilingual education programs fail to provide an equal education to the state's English language learners. During the 81st Legislative Session, [18 separate bills were filed](#) aimed at reforming and improving our state's bilingual education system. With no leadership at the top, all failed to pass.

Falling behind in these crucial areas already affects Texas' ability to compete. Texas has the highest percentage of those 25 and older without a high school diploma and ranks 46th in SAT scores. Recently, the Select Commission on Higher Education and Global Competitiveness, created under a resolution sponsored by our office, [released a report](#) examining how to make Texas competitive once again. The report found:

"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."

Let us be clear: the future of Texas depends on our ability to educate the next generation—in particular our Hispanic children. In order to achieve the goals established by "Closing the Gaps," true leaders must provide financial help for students enrolled at public colleges and universities and assist those students in graduating quickly and joining the workforce. True leaders must work to develop evidence-based and effective bilingual education to ensure that the quality of education received by English language learners is just as good as that given to other students. And true leaders must understand that each day spent not facing the challenge of Murdock's prophesy is simply another day that Texas falls behind the rest of America.

- End -

800 WYOMING AVE., SUITE A • EL PASO, TEXAS 79902

(800) 544-1990 • (915) 544-1990