



Senator Eliot Shapleigh

District 29

Texas Press Release

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GROVER'S TUB IN TEXAS

"When Perry, Norquist and the extreme wing of the Republican party value tax cuts for the wealthy over good schools for children, Texas loses. Good government is of, by and for people—and those irresponsible few who seek to starve government, are really starving us. Far from the envy of the nation, our great state is now 'no longer competitive.' The good news is this — with hard work and responsible leaders, all of us, working together, can get Texas out of Grover's Tub."

Today, Grover Norquist is in Austin to campaign for Governor Rick Perry.

Norquist once famously said that his goal was to 'cut government in half in twenty five years to get it down to the size where we can drown it in a bathtub.'" So twenty five years after Rick Perry first came to Austin, what is the real state of the state?

Early in the 81st Session of the Texas Legislature, Governor Rick Perry gave his state of the state speech. [Here's what he said:](#)

"Ladies and gentlemen, the State of our State is good."

Here's what he did not say: "When the extreme wing of the Republican party value tax cuts for the wealthy over good schools for our children, Texas loses. Good government is of, by and for people—and those irresponsible few who seek to starve government are really starving us."

After five sessions under Rick Perry as Governor, here is the reality behind his rhetoric: [5.83 million Texans have no health insurance](#)—one in four— making Texas the least insured state in the nation with more losing insurance every day. [Not a single Texas city even reaches the national average](#) in citizens with health insurance.

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From 2001 to 2005, Texas families saw their health insurance premiums soar 86 percent—six times faster than their incomes increased. Despite the health care crisis in Texas, during the 81st Legislative Session, Perry [stated that he'd veto a Children's Health Insurance Program \(CHIP\) bill](#) that had already passed the Senate 29—2.

In education, we now rank 46th in SAT scores and dead last in the percentage of the population 25 and older with a high school diploma. Only 64 percent of ninth graders from high school graduate within four years, and only 35 percent enter college. By fall 2009, tuition at places like the University of Texas at El Paso will have increased 73 percent, making college a distant dream for many Texans.

Our great Texas cities have America's worst air. Texans now breathe air with [more carcinogens](#) than citizens of any other state in America. [Insurance rates on health, home, and auto are among the highest in the U.S. and rising](#). Failed regulatory agencies let predatory lenders [push 1,100 percent interest rates on pay day loans](#) on every corner in towns like my own.

How did our challenges get so big? What happened to our great state? Grover happened. Coincidentally, 25 years ago, Rick Perry first entered the Texas House to deliver Grover Norquist's philosophy to Texas. Then and there, he and his band of Pit Bulls put Texas on a path to Grover's Tub—his legacy project of cutting taxes for the wealthy, creating a structural deficit to cut essential programs like schools and making government work only for a select few.

Now, after a quarter century of government by Grover, Texas is in Grover's Tub. When leaders value tax cuts over good schools, budget cuts over our future, and de—regulation over common sense, we lose.

How does Grover's tub affect every Texan?

Let's start with this quote from the [Select Commission on Higher Education and Global Competitiveness](#), Rick Perry's own business commission designed to make Texas competitive once again:

"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."

If current trends and leadership, the state's demographer bluntly predicts that the average Texas household income will fall by \$6000 by 2040. Far from the envy of the nation, Texas is, by Perry's commission's admission, no longer competitive.

"The good news is this — with hard work and responsible leaders, all of us, working together, can get Texas out of Grover's Tub. Norquist's visit is a wake up call to every Texan."

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