

Senator Eliot Shapleigh

CAPITOL REVIEW

Summer 2006

*“Fighting for our children,
our community and our future”*

– Senator Eliot Shapleigh



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Dear Friend:

Our Children, Our Community, Our Future

Right now, El Paso is the best place to be. The next ten years will be the best era for El Paso since the late 1940s. Much of what we have worked so hard to start is now moving forward--our medical school, BRAC, business incubators, technology, border manufacturing and mobility. We have more to do-- improving our schools, laptops for our children, health insurance for many more El Pasoans, moving UTEP to 50 percent graduation rates, expanding the Franklin Mountain State Park, developing a technology center here in El Paso, fighting to fix CHIP, and most of all watching El Paso medical students walk across the stage in August 2008.

We have worked hard to mentor independent, progressive young leaders into positions to move the El Paso agenda. We also have demonstrated the courage to stand up to mean-spirited policies that are so damaging to us here in El Paso like budget cuts and tax bills that increase your taxes.

Serving you has been a humbling and wonderful experience. Our children, our community and our future are worth the fight!

Very Truly Yours,

Eliot Shapleigh

Eliot Shapleigh

MOVING EL PASO FORWARD

El Paso Medical School

With vision, leadership, and resources, El Paso will be the capitol of Hispanic health. Every day we work private and public agendas to move the medical school forward. Let's first celebrate all that has been done over the last five sessions--the vision statement, \$50 million endowment fund, a BHI law, medical school authority, \$140 million to build two buildings and a host of private grants are in place.

During the Third Called Special Session, Senator Shapleigh worked to secure \$6.3 million in Tuition Revenue Bond Money for El Paso's Medical School. The funding, however, does not include the \$22.87 million necessary to hire teaching staff to meet the planned school start date in 2008. So why did we not get the \$22.87 million during the special session? In the Senate, we have passed \$65 million in funding for faculty three times and even after the Special Session, significant surplus exists to fund the faculty. So we have asked Governor Perry to make good on his promise to our medical school and fund it this year.

UTEP Engineering Complex

With Future Combat Systems, medical engineering, the Regional Mobility Authority, and just-in-time manufacturing on El Paso's near horizon, UTEP's national reputation in engineering is critical to future job creation. During the Third Called Special Session, Senator Shapleigh fought to secure \$76.5 million in tuition revenue bonds (TRBs) for renovations and repairs to UTEP's Physical Science/Engineering Core Facility.

This significant amount of money is just the most recent addition of funding that Senator Shapleigh has worked hard to help UTEP achieve:

- \$21.2 million for UTEP Biomedical and Health Science Center (2001)
- Increased UTEP's appropriation \$4.5 million over biennium figures (1997)
- \$14 million in TRBs for UTEP projects ranging from modernizing existing classrooms and updating laboratory equipment (1997)
- Transfer of over \$1.3 million in funds from the UT Medical Branch in Galveston to UTEP for programs in physical and occupational therapy (1997)
- Increased UTEP appropriations by \$18.4 million over the prior biennium, including \$7.5 million for technology, library materials and building renovation (1999)
- \$25 million for UTEP for the establishment of the Border Health Institute (1999)
- \$3 million for the creation of UTEP's Center for Law and Border Studies and sports medicine program (1999)
- \$5.6 million for UTEP in "capital equity and excellence funding" (1999)
- \$8.9 million in new research funding (2001)
- Fought for funding for the creation of a University of Texas School of Public Health Center in El Paso in collaboration with UTEP (2003)

Senator Shapleigh has worked hard to support UTEP in becoming a national leader in Hispanic research and academics. Senator Shapleigh has always believed that if Coach Price can make the Miners #1 on the field, together we can make our Miners #1 in the classroom!

Hillcrest Elementary- 21st Century School

"In the 21st Century, a great education requires great literacy in technology. By creating a laptop immersion



program in Texas, our state makes great strides in educating our children in technology."

Senator Eliot Shapleigh

In the 79th Regular Session, Senator Shapleigh passed S.B. 396 which directs the Texas Education Agency to establish a Technology Immersion Pilot Program (TIP), in which as many as five selected school districts would voluntarily participate. The TIP program is a rigorous exploration in partnership of technology vendors, state government, school districts and communities across the state, designed to see how best a state as diverse as Texas can implement one-to-one within its borders.

The Ysleta Independent School District in El Paso accepted the challenge. The TIP pilot project in this district will serve approximately 657 students and 40 teachers at Hillcrest Middle School (grades 7 and 8). During the 80th Session of the Texas Legislature, Senator Shapleigh will fight to take this pilot to all schools.

Great Streets

In October 2000, Senator Shapleigh, along with many other El Pasoans, formally kicked off El Paso Pride. The idea is that El Pasoans can develop pride in their city and neighborhood through revitalization and beautification of the state's medians, borders and adjoining public sites.

Senator Shapleigh has ensured that the El Paso District for TxDot has distinguished itself as an active member of the El Paso community by promoting and sponsoring creative community involvement programs. El Paso Pride Day, Keep El Paso Beautiful, Gift to the Mountain Day, and Adopt a Highway are a few of the many programs sponsored by TxDot and developed by the District Landscaping and Aesthetics Section.

Clean Air

"Our future is bright, if our air is clean and our children are safe."

Senator Eliot Shapleigh

Senator Shapleigh led over 500 people (including 100 UTEP students) to Austin in February for the ASARCO emissions permit renewal hearing. Senator Shapleigh and other ASARCO opponents, Mayor John Cook, Mayor Ruben Segura of Sunland Park, NM and Senator Jeffery Jones of Chihuahua, gathered to make a historical statement for our entire three-state region against the re-opening of ASARCO.

The hearing room was packed with people who want clean air and a bright future for El Paso. Plans for a new

FIGHTING FOR US IN AUSTIN

Downtown cannot move forward if ASARCO reopens with the right to release 7,000 tons of new pollutants into our air. Below are portions of TCEQ's Interim Order on ASARCO's air permit renewal:

- ASARCO must submit additional emissions data related to the El Paso plant and its impact on the surrounding areas, including current modeling results, by September 10, 2006. Area-wide modeling shall be conducted on a 50-kilometer basis, but only the impact of emissions in Texas shall be considered.
- The Executive Director shall prepare a recommended report by November 10, 2006. The ED shall also prepare a schedule as required by the permit renewal portion of the Texas Clean Air Act. The schedule serves as the timeline to which ASARCO must adhere in meeting TCEQ's requirements for permit renewal.

Our air, our environment, and our future are worth the fight!

Great Schools

Teachers are key to a bright Texas future. While advances in technology and research have improved public education, nothing matters more in the classroom than great teachers and motivated students. As our great state moves forward, teachers will make the difference.

During his time in office, Senator Shapleigh has worked hard to fairly compensate teachers. In 1999, Senator Shapleigh worked with Democrats and Republicans in the Senate and House to provide school teachers, counselors, librarians, and nurses with a \$3,000 pay raise. He then worked with Senator Teel Bivins (R-Amarillo) in 2001 to provide teachers with a \$1,500 health insurance stipend. During the Special Session, the work of Senator Shapleigh and a coalition of Senators representing property-poor school districts from all over the state (12 Democrats and 6 Republicans) were key to ensuring teachers a pay raise of \$2,000.

Senator Shapleigh intends to continue to fight for great Texas schools so that we truly invest in our teachers, our children, and our future.

Lower Property Taxes

In H.B. 1, the key element of school finance, equal funding for all schools, survived a three year attack. Senator Shapleigh and a coalition of Senators representing property-poor school districts from all over the state crafted and passed a new 'equity' framework based on the property-wealth of the Austin Independent School District (AISD). In the bill, all property poor districts and the 88 percent of the Texas school children they educate are now on track to achieve the same money as each Austin child gets.

In El Paso, H.B.1 means more money for each student, for certified teachers, better technology, lower property taxes, and the rigorous courses that lead to good jobs.

Major Provisions of H.B.1:

- Reduces school property taxes to \$1.33 next year and down to \$1.00 the following year;
- \$2,000 teacher pay raise;
- Invests more in high schools with a new High School Allotment of \$275 per student;
- Maintains the principles of equity by sending money through the equalized system;
- Provides for performance pay to reward schools with disadvantaged students that demonstrate the greatest gains in student performance;
- Maintains the \$500 healthcare stipend for the 300,000 public school support personnel;



- Restores the proclamation and issuance of math textbooks;
- Provides that children of military personnel qualify for free, state pre-kindergarten;
- Creates dual credits so high school graduates can obtain up to 12 hours of college credit for work done in high school; and
- Streamlines courses from elementary school through college so students get the tough courses they need to succeed.

Children's Health Insurance

"Texans deserve honest, straightforward and efficient administration of our health programs, especially those that serve children and the elderly."

Senator Eliot Shapleigh

In the 76th Legislative Session, Senator Shapleigh co-authored and passed legislation (S.B. 445) which created the CHIP program and helped lead El Paso to the title of "Best in Texas" in terms of enrolling children in CHIP upon the program's initial launch. Along with other community leaders, Senator Shapleigh helped set up and operate phone banks, a telethon, a media campaign, as well as placing the application in the *Pathway to Lifelong Health and Learning* packet produced by the Paso Del Norte Health Foundation and spearheaded enrollment drives throughout the city and worked with area school districts to disseminate the application throughout the community.

In May of 2006, to root out incompetent bureaucrats, Senator Shapleigh wrote to Carole Keeton Strayhorn, Comptroller of Public Accounts, requesting an investigation into Texas Access Alliance/Accenture's operation of state's eligibility system for public benefits. Comptroller Strayhorn quickly responded by stating that she will be conducting the investigation.

Senator Shapleigh is committed to ensuring that all Texas children have access to health care. Our children are worth the fight!

Protecting our Elderly

During the 79th Legislative session, the Legislature took on the enormous task of reforming Adult Protective Services (APS) and Child Protective Services (CPS), the two agencies that investigate the neglect, abuse, and exploitation of society's most vulnerable populations. Senator Shapleigh was asked to draft the 69 page APS component of the bill. Senator Shapleigh convened a workgroup of experts from across the nation to craft a comprehensive reform to Texas' APS.

Through his work, the final version of the reform



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legislation creates the Guardianship Certification Board at the Office of Court Administration, tightens procedures and provides more quality assurance of the state guardianship program, and ensures better training and oversight of staff at the Department of Family and Protective Services. Additionally, the legislation ensures a more thorough review of cases through staff and special task units, improves the risk assessment process, guarantees more sharing of information among agencies and the public, and changes the emergency order process to facilitate more immediate response. Finally, the bill calls for an interim study of local adult protective services boards, a case management reduction plan by the Health and Human Services Commission, and a pilot program for monitoring unlicensed long-term care facilities.

Fighting Predatory Lenders and Protecting our Soldiers

“Soldiers fight for us--we need to fight predatory lenders for them.”

Senator Eliot Shapleigh

Senator Shapleigh has consistently fought for access to credit and capital in Texas, arguing that the American Dream should be accessible for all Texans. Predatory lending has become one of the most critical policy issues facing the financial services industry, particularly in mortgage lending. Predatory lenders often target their services to particularly vulnerable customers like our soldiers and our elderly.

Last spring, during the 79th regular legislative session, Senator Shapleigh

passed S.B. 1479, which prohibits short-term lenders from garnishing soldiers' paychecks and forbids them from contacting a commanding officer to collect a debt. During hearings, Senators heard of predatory lenders who charged 780% interest on 30 day loans.

“What we are trying to do is have soldiers make informed decisions and protect them from abuse,” said Shapleigh.

With this powerful legislative tool at her disposal, the Texas Commissioner of Consumer Credit, Leslie Pettijohn, sued John A. Gill Jr., an Alabama businessman who was offering Internet access as part of a high-interest-loan inducement to soldiers at several military posts in Texas. The suit was filed in El Paso County.

The Commissioner accused Mr. Gill Jr. of violating the state's deceptive-trade practices and usury laws by charging interest rates as high as 782 percent on loans linked to the purchase of Internet-use time. This represents precisely the type of abuses that Senator Shapleigh targeted when filing S.B. 1479.

Texas Education Leader of the Year

In March, 2006, Senator Shapleigh received two additional statewide awards. He was awarded the Education Leadership Award through the Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce (TAMACC) and the Legislator of Excellence Award from the Texas Independent Living Council for his part in protecting and advancing the rights of our elderly by authoring the Adult Protective Services Reform Act of 2005.

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