

# HOUSE JOURNAL

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EIGHTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION

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## PROCEEDINGS

FIRST DAY — TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2017

In accordance with the laws and Constitution of the State of Texas, the members-elect of the house of representatives assembled this day in the hall of the house of representatives in the city of Austin. At 12:02 p.m., the Honorable Rolando Pablos, secretary of state of the State of Texas, called the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Fifth Legislature of the State of Texas to order.

Secretary Pablos recognized the Honorable Lyle Larson of Bexar County who introduced Reverend Dr. Bob Fuller, pastor, First Presbyterian Church, San Antonio, who offered the invocation.

Secretary Pablos recognized members of the choral ensemble Conspirare who sang the national anthem.

Secretary Pablos recognized the Honorable Rick Miller of Fort Bend County who led the house in the pledge of allegiance to the United States flag.

Secretary Pablos recognized the Honorable James White of Tyler County who led the house in the pledge of allegiance to the Texas flag.

### **ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

The Honorable Rolando Pablos, secretary of state of the State of Texas, addressed the house, speaking as follows:

It is a tremendous honor to gavel in the 85th Legislative Session and to assume an office first held by the great Stephen F. Austin. I am extremely grateful to Governor Abbott and for his trust and confidence in me to execute the duties of this office. I would also like to express my appreciation to outgoing Secretary of State Carlos Cascos and thank him for his service to our state.

Today, ladies and gentlemen, you have answered the call to serve. Collectively, you have descended on this hallowed chamber to represent the interests of the nearly 28 million Texans from 254 distinctly diverse counties. Texans have always answered the call to serve, no matter how high the price, since the time William Barret Travis drew a line in the sand. Whether on fields of battle, in boardrooms and classrooms, in houses of faith, or through charitable giving, Texans have long embraced their civic duty to serve their community. And as you accept the challenges of service over the next 140 days and beyond, I encourage you to always remember this: Texas leads; others follow. Travel the world and tell them you are from Texas, and they will have a distinct image in their mind. They will know the Lone Star State; they will sense your pride; they will understand what you are made of; and they will wish they, too, lived here.

But Texas is so much more than cowboy hats, oil wells, and pickup trucks. Yes, our rural communities are the backbone of our great state. Our farmers and ranchers give us so much of themselves and of their bounty. But we are also an urban state—home to the arts, to high tech jobs, world-class medical centers, top multinational corporations, and hip restaurants. We not only drill for oil but harness the wind, and we welcome more Californians to their new home than any other state.

In this, the dawn of the 21st century, this is the place to be. And it's the great men and women in these chambers who chart the course for this great state. What happens in Texas, the world's 10th largest economy, leaves a powerful impression on other economies around the globe—from Brazil and Colombia, to Japan and Singapore, to Belgium and the Netherlands, and especially our friends in Mexico, our largest trade partner, whose relationship serves as a force-multiplier for Texas' economic success. Our rightful place on the international stage is, in fact, center stage, and you today hold the key to this continued success. The momentum for our state's continued achievement is fueled by your decisions. You arrive here today with unique perspectives and, in some cases, passionate differences. I know that every one of us will respect those differences with the purpose of finding common ground in order to advance the common good. We may have different ways of getting there, but we all have a common objective: to keep Texas the land of opportunity—a place that rewards hard work, one that develops talent, one that attracts investment—where a vision can become reality. I ask one thing of you today. Please ensure that you will always put Texas and Texans first and not stand just with the powerful but on behalf of the powerless. Like Travis at the Alamo, I ask that you draw a line in the sand in defense of this state that we love and its people: our seniors, our disabled, and especially the youngest generation.

I would like to close by telling the story of one of those young Texans who is with us today. He, along with his parents and high school principal, helped me gavel in this session. On the outside, he looks like any other high school senior preparing for his last semester. But Coby Shorter IV has a story that defies the odds. You see, during the spring of his freshman year, he was involved in a major accident on the road just outside the family farm—a tragic event that left him fighting for his life. While he could have used this incident as an excuse to give up, he accepted the challenge of learning to walk again, enduring 19 surgeries, returning to and excelling in school, and giving back to his community and to those who helped save his life. Coby is an inspiration to all who know and love him. Will you please help me recognize and congratulate Coby for the courage and determination he has demonstrated at such an early age?

But the simple fact is ordinary Texans do extraordinary things every day, making this Texas we love a truly special place. It is their interests we serve; it is their lives we must honor; and it is their future we must advance. Thank you, and may God bless you and continue to give you the courage and determination to fight for Texas.

## APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES

Secretary Pablos recognized the chief clerk who announced the temporary officers and employees for the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Fifth Legislature of the State of Texas.

Parliamentarian . . . . . Chris Griesel  
 Chief Clerk . . . . . Robert Haney  
 Journal Clerk . . . . . Jennifer Teigen Doran  
 Sergeant-at-Arms . . . . . David Saucedo  
 Voting Clerk . . . . . Scottie Hagen  
 Committee Coordinator . . . . . Stacey Nicchio  
 Chaplains . . . . . Reverend Dr. Bob Fuller and Bishop Daniel E. Garcia  
 Doorkeeper . . . . . Alana Hays  
 Honorary Pages . . . . . Jacob Camp and Garrison Camp

## ROLL OF MEMBERS-ELECT SHOWING DISTRICTS REPRESENTED

Secretary Pablos directed the chief clerk to call the roll of members-elect of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Fifth Legislature of the State of Texas, according to representative districts.

The roll was called as follows:

| <u>DISTRICT</u> | <u>NAME</u>       |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| District 1      | Gary VanDeaver    |
| District 2      | Dan Flynn         |
| District 3      | Cecil Bell        |
| District 4      | Lance Gooden      |
| District 5      | Cole Hefner       |
| District 6      | Matt Schaefer     |
| District 7      | Jay Dean          |
| District 8      | Byron Cook        |
| District 9      | Chris Paddie      |
| District 10     | John Wray         |
| District 11     | Travis Clardy     |
| District 12     | Kyle Kacal        |
| District 13     | Leighton Schubert |
| District 14     | John Raney        |
| District 15     | Mark Keough       |
| District 16     | Will Metcalf      |
| District 17     | John Cyrier       |
| District 18     | Ernest Bailes     |
| District 19     | James White       |
| District 20     | Terry Wilson      |
| District 21     | Dade Phelan       |
| District 22     | Joe Deshotel      |
| District 23     | Wayne Faircloth   |
| District 24     | Greg Bonnen       |

|             |                          |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| District 25 | Dennis Bonnen            |
| District 26 | D. F. "Rick" Miller      |
| District 27 | Ron Reynolds             |
| District 28 | John Zerwas              |
| District 29 | Ed Thompson              |
| District 30 | Geanie W. Morrison       |
| District 31 | Ryan Guillen             |
| District 32 | Todd Hunter              |
| District 33 | Justin Holland           |
| District 34 | Abel Herrero             |
| District 35 | Oscar Longoria           |
| District 36 | Sergio Muñoz Jr.         |
| District 37 | René O. Oliveira         |
| District 38 | Eddie Lucio III          |
| District 39 | Armando "Mando" Martinez |
| District 40 | Terry Canales            |
| District 41 | Bobby Guerra             |
| District 42 | Richard Peña Raymond     |
| District 43 | J. M. Lozano             |
| District 44 | John Kuempel             |
| District 45 | Jason A. Isaac           |
| District 46 | Dawnna Dukes             |
| District 47 | Paul Workman             |
| District 48 | Donna Howard             |
| District 49 | Gina Hinojosa            |
| District 50 | Celia Israel             |
| District 51 | Eddie Rodriguez          |
| District 52 | Larry Gonzales           |
| District 53 | Andrew S. Murr           |
| District 54 | Scott Cosper             |
| District 55 | Hugh D. Shine            |
| District 56 | Charles "Doc" Anderson   |
| District 57 | Trent Ashby              |
| District 58 | DeWayne Burns            |
| District 59 | J. D. Sheffield          |
| District 60 | Mike Lang                |
| District 61 | Phil King                |
| District 62 | Larry Phillips           |
| District 63 | Tan Parker               |
| District 64 | Lynn Stucky              |
| District 65 | Ron Simmons              |
| District 66 | Matt Shaheen             |
| District 67 | Jeff Leach               |
| District 68 | Drew Springer            |
| District 69 | James B. Frank           |
| District 70 | Scott Sanford            |

|              |                       |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| District 71  | Stan Lambert          |
| District 72  | Drew Darby            |
| District 73  | Kyle Biedermann       |
| District 74  | Poncho Nevárez        |
| District 75  | Mary E. González      |
| District 76  | César J. Blanco       |
| District 77  | Evelina "Lina" Ortega |
| District 78  | Joe Moody             |
| District 79  | Joseph C. Pickett     |
| District 80  | Tracy O. King         |
| District 81  | Brooks Landgraf       |
| District 82  | Tom Craddick          |
| District 83  | Dustin Burrows        |
| District 84  | John Frullo           |
| District 85  | Phil Stephenson       |
| District 86  | John Smithee          |
| District 87  | Four Price            |
| District 88  | Ken King              |
| District 89  | Jodie Laubenberg      |
| District 90  | Ramon Romero Jr.      |
| District 91  | Stephanie Klick       |
| District 92  | Jonathan Stickland    |
| District 93  | Matt Krause           |
| District 94  | Tony Tinderholt       |
| District 95  | Nicole Collier        |
| District 96  | Bill Zedler           |
| District 97  | Craig Goldman         |
| District 98  | Giovanni Capriglione  |
| District 99  | Charlie Geren         |
| District 100 | Eric Johnson          |
| District 101 | Chris Turner          |
| District 102 | Linda Koop            |
| District 103 | Rafael M. Anchia      |
| District 104 | Roberto R. Alonzo     |
| District 105 | Rodney Anderson       |
| District 106 | Pat Fallon            |
| District 107 | Victoria Neave        |
| District 108 | Morgan Meyer          |
| District 109 | Helen Giddings        |
| District 110 | Toni Rose             |
| District 111 | Yvonne Davis          |
| District 112 | Angie Chen Button     |
| District 113 | Cindy Burkett         |
| District 114 | Jason Villalba        |
| District 115 | Matt Rinaldi          |
| District 116 | Diana Arévalo         |

|              |                         |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| District 117 | Philip Cortez           |
| District 118 | Tomas Uresti            |
| District 119 | Roland Gutierrez        |
| District 120 | Barbara Gervin-Hawkins  |
| District 121 | Joe Straus              |
| District 122 | Lyle Larson             |
| District 123 | Diego Bernal            |
| District 124 | Ina Minjarez            |
| District 125 | Justin Rodriguez        |
| District 126 | Kevin Roberts           |
| District 127 | Dan Huberty             |
| District 128 | Briscoe Cain            |
| District 129 | Dennis Paul             |
| District 130 | Tom Oliverson           |
| District 131 | Alma A. Allen           |
| District 132 | Mike Schofield          |
| District 133 | Jim Murphy              |
| District 134 | Sarah Davis             |
| District 135 | Gary Elkins             |
| District 136 | Tony Dale               |
| District 137 | Gene Wu                 |
| District 138 | Dwayne Bohac            |
| District 139 | Jarvis D. Johnson       |
| District 140 | Armando Lucio Walle     |
| District 141 | Senfronia Thompson      |
| District 142 | Harold V. Dutton Jr.    |
| District 143 | Ana Hernandez           |
| District 144 | Mary Ann Perez          |
| District 145 | Carol Alvarado          |
| District 146 | Shawn Thierry           |
| District 147 | Garnet F. Coleman       |
| District 148 | Jessica Cristina Farrar |
| District 149 | Hubert Vo               |
| District 150 | Valoree Swanson         |

A quorum was announced present.

### **OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED**

Secretary Pablos recognized the chief clerk who administered the constitutional oath of office to the members-elect of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Fifth Legislature of the State of Texas, all of those present rising together and repeating the following oath, prescribed by the Constitution, as it was read to them, as follows:

"I, \_\_\_\_\_, do solemnly swear (or affirm), that I will faithfully execute the duties of the office of a member of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Fifth Legislature of the State of Texas, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States and of this state. So help me God."

### **TEMPORARY RULES ADOPTED**

Representatives Smithee and Moody moved to adopt the house rules of procedure from the Eighty-Fourth Legislature as temporary rules for the election of the speaker, where applicable.

The motion prevailed.

#### **HR 1 - ADOPTED (by Geren and Howard)**

The following resolution was laid before the house:

#### **HR 1**

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas, That pending the election of the speaker, all persons other than members of the legislature, members of their families, the secretary of state, temporary officers and their staffs, and approved guests or press representatives be barred from the floor of the house of representatives inside the rail.

**HR 1** was read and was adopted.

#### **HR 2 - ADOPTED (by Hunter, Cook, Villalba, Dutton, and Lucio)**

The following resolution was laid before the house:

#### **HR 2**

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the State of Texas, That, in accordance with Sections 9(b) and 11, Article III, Texas Constitution, the House of Representatives of the 85th Legislature shall elect a speaker of the house from its own membership as follows:

SECTION 1. NOMINATIONS. (a) The secretary of state shall call for nominations from the floor for the election of speaker of the house of representatives and shall recognize every member who desires to make a nomination. The order in which members desiring to make a nomination shall proceed shall be determined by lot.

(b) Each member recognized for this purpose shall immediately advance to the front microphone and make the nomination in a nominating speech not to exceed five minutes in length.

(c) After all nominations have been made, the secretary of state shall declare nominations to be closed.

SECTION 2. SECONDS. (a) A person is not considered a nominee unless the nomination is seconded by at least one member.

(b) One seconding speech shall be allowed for each nomination in the order in which nominations were made, then other seconding speeches shall be allowed in rotation in the same order.

(c) No more than three seconding speeches shall be allowed for each nominee.

(d) A seconding speech may not exceed four minutes in length.

SECTION 3. VOTING PROCEDURES: VOTING MACHINE. (a) If after the close of all seconding speeches only one nominee remains for election to the speaker, the secretary of state shall recognize a motion to elect that nominee by acclamation. If no motion is made or five or more members make a written request for a record vote, the members shall record their votes from their desks on the voting machine with the yeas and nays taken as in other record votes of the house.

(b) If there are two or three nominees for speaker, the members shall record their votes from their desks on the voting machine with a different colored light on the machine indicating a vote for each nominee. If the nominees cannot agree on the color that will indicate a vote for each nominee, the presiding officer shall draw lots to determine the color for each nominee.

(c) Before the close of voting on the voting machine, the presiding officer shall provide several warnings to the members that the voting period is about to close.

(d) A verification of a vote taken by voting machine shall be by roll call vote, with the members seated and the house at order, beginning with the members recorded as voting for the nominee with the most votes. During verification, a member may not change a vote unless it was erroneously recorded, and any member not having voted for a nominee may not cast a vote.

(e) If there are three nominees for speaker, a member who does not cast a vote for a nominee but who was recorded as present at the initial roll call shall be recorded as "present, not voting" in the record of the vote.

SECTION 4. VOTING PROCEDURES: ROLL CALL VOTE. (a) If there are more than three nominees for speaker, the election shall be held in the manner provided for a roll call vote of the members with the chief clerk calling the members' names in alphabetical order. When the chief clerk reads aloud the name of a member, the member shall vote by stating the name of one of the nominees or state that the member is present, not voting. The chief clerk shall repeat the member's vote aloud and record the vote on a tally sheet.

(b) After all members have announced their votes, the chief clerk shall prepare a report containing the total votes received by each nominee and the total number of members who are present, not voting. The chief clerk shall provide a copy of the report to the secretary of state.

(c) A verification of a vote taken by roll call consists solely of ensuring that an announced vote was tallied correctly.

SECTION 5. RECORD VOTE. All votes taken shall be record votes with the vote of each member entered in the House Journal.



SECTION 6. RESULTS; RUNOFF. (a) The secretary of state shall announce the results of the election. If a nominee receives a majority of the votes cast, the secretary of state shall declare that nominee to be elected to the office of speaker of the house of representatives.

(b) If no nominee receives a majority of the votes cast, the two nominees receiving the largest number of votes in the initial vote shall be in a runoff conducted by voting machine as provided by Section 3 of this resolution. The secretary of state shall announce the results of the runoff and declare the nominee receiving a majority of the votes cast to be elected.

SECTION 7. TIE VOTES. (a) If in the initial vote no nominee receives a majority of the votes cast and it is not possible to determine the two nominees receiving the largest number of votes cast because of a tie vote, additional rounds of voting shall occur among the same nominees, other than a nominee who withdraws, until a nominee receives a majority of the votes cast or, if no nominee receives a majority of the votes cast, until it is possible to determine the two nominees who receive the largest number of votes cast.

(b) If in a runoff between two nominees no nominee receives a majority of the votes cast because of a tie vote, additional rounds of runoff voting shall occur between the same two nominees until one of the nominees in the runoff receives a majority of the votes cast.

SECTION 8. OATH. After the election, the secretary of state shall direct the administration of the oath of office to the speaker-elect. The speaker shall take the chair immediately after taking the oath of office.

**HR 2** was read and was adopted.

### **ELECTION OF THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Secretary Pablos announced that the next order of business would be the election of the speaker of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Fifth Legislature of the State of Texas and stated nominations for speaker would now be in order.

Secretary Pablos recognized the Honorable Chris Paddie of Harrison County, who placed in nomination for speaker of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Fifth Legislature of the State of Texas the name of the Honorable Joe Straus of Bexar County, speaking as follows:

Mr. Secretary, members, and honored guests, I consider it a privilege to stand before you today to place in nomination the name of Representative Joe Straus for speaker of the Texas House of Representatives for the 85th Legislative Session. I also want to congratulate each of you and tell you that I am excited about the opportunity that we have to work together to continue to move Texas forward.

One of our first actions in working together is to elect a speaker that will provide steady and experienced leadership, a leader that respects differing views and welcomes our input, and a person who will keep us focused on the things that matter most to the people of Texas. That person is Joe Straus. Joe Straus is

preparing to serve his fifth term as speaker. Members, that doesn't happen by accident. To me, that is evidence of Joe's strong leadership, his proven record of getting results, and his ability to bring us together.

But you know, it's not just that he provides great leadership. It's also that he expects us to lead. You see, Speaker Straus respects this body and the process. He understands that this place is special and that in this chamber it's different. He works for us. Because Joe respects and understands this, he doesn't seek to lead from out front. Instead, he allows the process to work and empowers the members to lead on issues.

Years from now when our time is done, history will not judge us on how many bills we passed, how many awards we received, and certainly not on what grade we received on a scorecard. Instead, history will judge us on whether or not together we did the necessary work, whether together we advanced policies that protected and strengthened this state, and whether or not together we had the courage to do the right thing for Texas, even when it wasn't popular. Members, I submit to you that if we want to continue to build on the successes that we have enjoyed under Speaker Straus' leadership, we need to recommit ourselves to doing the necessary work and to governing together. That's what the people who send us here expect from us.

So Mr. Secretary and members, it is with complete confidence and without hesitation that I place in nomination Representative Joe Straus as speaker of the Texas House of Representatives for the 85th Legislative Session.

Secretary Pablos recognized the Honorable Mark Keough of Montgomery County, who seconded the nomination of the Honorable Joe Straus, speaking as follows:

Mr. Secretary, fellow members, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is a singular honor for me to address such a group on such an auspicious occasion. With my short tenure as a legislator, I trust that my words will ring true to all in attendance and especially to our freshmen.

As many of you know, I am a member of a group—the gang of 19—who voted against the nomination of Joe Straus as the speaker of the house in the last session, the 84th Session. I campaigned in my district according to the wishes of a variety of groups—good people with whom for the most part I am in full agreement with their political stance—who encouraged me to stand against the nomination of our speaker last session.

It should be noted, because I'm a pastor and believe in the wisdom of the scriptures that the proverbs teach, that there are two sides to every story. The man that listens to one side of the story is a fool. And so according to the dictates of my conscience, I chose to visit the speaker before the 84th Session and bring up the upcoming vote between the speaker and his challenger before the vote was taken. As I inquired about the upcoming debate, I was met with graciousness by the speaker and his staff. I gave the speaker every opportunity to speak against his opponent and hear his position, but never did I hear one word of disparagement or anger against the challenger. I was invited with my bride, Kim, to the freshmen orientation banquet where I spent time with the speaker and his wife. I listened as he told me about his life, his family, and the opportunity that

was before me as a legislator. I heard nothing but gracious, positive words. Having been in the car business—I was a partner in a dealership and managed a Lexus store, all combined almost 26 years—I had learned to question everything I was told. Yet I saw no guile in the speaker. Needless to say, I became very conflicted as to how I would vote the next day.

True to my word, I voted in favor of the speaker's opponent. Yet I remained conflicted. For almost two months, I found myself on an island between those who supported the speaker and those who stood in opposition. During that time, the freshness of biblical truth was a guiding light to me as I watched and listened to the operations of the house. I watched the speaker's demeanor. I saw him demonstrate respect, honor, and statesmanship. I listened to my colleagues as they spoke about the character of our speaker and as I watched many archived videos of past sessions. I heard the words respect, fair, balanced, and leadership again and again as words that endorsed the nominations of Joe Straus from past sessions. Please understand that I do not take this lightly, as in this house we have a combination of brilliance and genius—doctors and attorneys and wildly successful entrepreneurs from Harvard, Tulane, UT, Tech, and our beloved A&M—that I have never seen in all my years. In a variety of settings, I observed the speaker and his interaction with his bride, Julie. Their kindness and humility, and their remembrance of names and birthdays and holidays is amazing.

As the voting on bills began, I watched individuals much younger than him in age attack him and, with relentless argument, challenge his authority. The words of scripture rang out, as Paul told Timothy in the New Testament, "do not rebuke an older man sharply," while the speaker remained calm and under total self-control. I watched day after day the management of a group of no less than 145 people whom I have come to love: my colleagues who have made sacrifices only those who have had the experience can understand, my fellow legislators who are part of a sacred fraternity who walk these halls of power with confidence and self-reliance—that some could characterize as a group of swashbuckling pirates but I see as men and women of strength, genius, and honor, who know what they believe and will never back down for the benefit of the people they represent—men and women chosen by God through our republican form of government, that is a wonder to not just other states but to the entire world. Who can manage such a group? Who has been given such authority by God? All the words inscribed on the wall behind me say, "In God We Trust." Yet daily I saw the speaker walk on the chamber floor and by his very presence bring a spirit of calm to an otherwise potentially chaotic environment.

As I observed the attitudes of the committee chairs, I noticed that when I maintained an attitude of respect and an attitude of teachability, when I approached them with questions on how I could get things done—sometimes in desperation as I thought about the expectations of the constituents I represent—to a person, they were gracious and accommodating and always willing to help me. How do you explain this? Management is everything. Our speaker, Joe Straus, has created an environment by his example where gifted leaders are free to work

on behalf of our body of legislators and the people they represent to produce what some have said about the last session was the most productive and significant legislature in the history of our great state.

Mr. Speaker, I have much more to say, but as you said, "Mark, I know you're a preacher, so keep it short." So in the interest of time, thank you for your guidance and your leadership, and for allowing all of us to know your incredible wife, Julie, and how she nurtures and loves us and our wives, the legislative ladies.

Mr. Secretary, it is with great honor that I, as a student of our craft, as a pastor, as a husband and father, and as a citizen and legislator of the great State of Texas, second the motion to make Representative Joe Straus of Bexar the speaker of the House of Representatives of the 85th Legislature. God bless you, Joe and Julie Straus. God bless all of my colleagues, family, and friends, and God bless the great State of Texas.

Secretary Pablos recognized the Honorable Poncho Nevárez of Maverick County, who seconded the nomination of the Honorable Joe Straus, speaking as follows:

Members and invited guests, I stand before you today to second the nomination and re-election of Joe Straus as our speaker. To be chosen to serve in the Texas House is a privilege. Everything we do here is for our constituents, for our state. We choose today who we trust to lead us while we do our work. The choice of who will lead this body belongs to us.

We are fortunate to have been led by someone as discerning as Joe Straus and who continues to offer that leadership. The man has many qualities that serve his constituents in San Antonio, the great State of Texas, and the Texas House. I highlight, in particular, his compassion, which gives him the courage to stand up for the people of Texas; his pragmatism, critical for shaping public policy; and his fairness, which he has shown while leading the people's house. Joe Straus is a republican and a conservative. As a democrat, I sometimes disagree with him on policy. As a West Texan, I know that character matters. Joe Straus is a man of great character, and the people of Texas are blessed to have him at the helm of this ship.

In my time here, I have seen the speaker incorporate the talents and expertise of every member. He leverages our skills, our personal experiences, and commitment to serve, allowing for meaningful vetting of legislation. This makes the house special. It makes it work. It empowers this chamber and, by extension, the people who chose us to produce the best public policy for all Texans.

Again, it is with great humility and honor that I second the nomination of Joe Straus as speaker of the Texas House of Representatives.

Secretary Pablos recognized the Honorable Linda Koop of Dallas County, who seconded the nomination of the Honorable Joe Straus, speaking as follows:

It is a great honor to second the nomination of Joe Straus as speaker. Rare is the leader who does not seek to impose his will, who realizes his power is rooted in his ability to forge alliances and find common ground. Joe Straus is such a leader.

In this house, every voice is heard and every district is represented. Ideas rise and fall on their merit. Members argue their perspectives with passion but also with civility and respect. That is the tone Joe Straus sets for this house—one of respectful leadership.

I have been fortunate to have served with many leaders, including four mayors in my home community. I see Joe as unique. He welcomes vigorous debate. He is confident enough in his own views to allow others to express their views. He leads with an invisible hand, quietly guiding this house in the right direction, solving the great challenges of our time without worrying about who gets the credit. It was Joe Straus who led the effort to secure our water supply for the next generation. He guided us toward thoughtful solutions to transportation gridlock without new taxes or additional debt. He has encouraged this house to address school finance without a court order. That's leadership. And now he has us focused on addressing the crises in mental health, Child Protective Services, and our broken foster care system. With Speaker Straus leading this house, I am confident we will make critical improvements to these safety net programs needed for the most vulnerable among us. And these reforms will include the best ideas of all members of this house.

So I rise to second the nomination of a true gentleman—a respectful leader who brings out the best in all of us; who protects the institutions of this house and its members; who leads with a steady hand, self-assurance, and the confidence of his convictions—our past, current, and future speaker, Joe Straus.

Representative Koop moved that nominations cease and that the Honorable Joe Straus be elected speaker of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Fifth Legislature of the State of Texas.

A record vote was requested.

The Honorable Joe Straus of Bexar County was elected speaker of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Fifth Legislature of the State of Texas by (Record 1): 150 Yeas, 0 Nays, 0 Present, not voting.

Yeas — Allen; Alonzo; Alvarado; Anchia; Anderson, C.; Anderson, R.; Arévalo; Ashby; Bailes; Bell; Bernal; Biedermann; Blanco; Bohac; Bonnen, D.; Bonnen, G.; Burkett; Burns; Burrows; Button; Cain; Canales; Capriglione; Clardy; Coleman; Collier; Cook; Cortez; Cosper; Craddick; Cyrier; Dale; Darby; Davis, S.; Davis, Y.; Dean; Deshotel; Dukes; Dutton; Elkins; Faircloth; Fallon; Farrar; Flynn; Frank; Frullo; Geren; Gervin-Hawkins; Giddings; Goldman; Gonzales; González; Gooden; Guerra; Guillen; Gutierrez; Hefner; Hernandez; Herrero; Hinojosa; Holland; Howard; Huberty; Hunter; Isaac; Israel; Johnson, E.; Johnson, J.; Kacal; Keough; King, K.; King, P.; King, T.; Klick; Koop; Krause; Kuempel; Lambert; Landgraf; Lang; Larson; Laubenberg; Leach; Longoria; Lozano; Lucio; Martinez; Metcalf; Meyer; Miller; Minjarez; Moody; Morrison; Muñoz; Murphy; Murr; Neave; Nevárez; Oliveira; Oliverson; Ortega; Paddie; Parker; Paul; Perez; Phelan; Phillips; Pickett; Price; Raney; Raymond; Reynolds; Rinaldi; Roberts; Rodriguez, E.; Rodriguez, J.; Romero; Rose; Sanford; Schaefer; Schofield; Schubert; Shaheen; Sheffield; Shine; Simmons; Smithee; Springer;

Stephenson; Stickland; Straus; Stucky; Swanson; Thierry; Thompson, E.; Thompson, S.; Tinderholt; Turner; Uresti; VanDeaver; Villalba; Vo; Walle; White; Wilson; Workman; Wray; Wu; Zedler; Zerwas.

### **COMMITTEE APPOINTED**

Secretary Pablos announced the appointment of the following committee to escort Speaker-elect Joe Straus to the speaker's rostrum: G. Bonnen, chair; Capriglione, Oliveira, Gutierrez, Collier, Turner, Dean, Meyer, Landgraf, Morrison, S. Thompson, and Shine.

### **HOUSE AT EASE**

At 12:56 p.m., Secretary Pablos announced that the house would stand at ease.

Secretary Pablos called the house to order at 1:06 p.m. and introduced Chief Justice Nathan L. Hecht of the Supreme Court of Texas.

Secretary Pablos recognized Representative Kuempel who introduced Speaker Straus and members of his family: Jocelyn and Joe Straus Jr., Julie Brink Straus, Susan Straus, Jim Keller, Lyn Selig, Barbara Brink, and Sandy Cash.

### **OATH OF OFFICE TAKEN BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE**

Speaker-elect Straus and his party were escorted to the speaker's rostrum.

The Honorable Joe Straus of Bexar County took the constitutional oath of office as speaker of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Fifth Legislature of the State of Texas, which was administered by the Honorable Nathan L. Hecht, chief justice of the Supreme Court of Texas, as follows:

"I, Joe Straus, do solemnly swear, that I will faithfully execute the duties of the office of speaker of the Texas House of Representatives of the Eighty-Fifth Legislature of the State of Texas, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States and of this state. So help me God."

### **ADDRESS BY THE SPEAKER**

Speaker Straus addressed the house, speaking as follows:

Thank you, members, for giving me the chance to once again serve as your speaker. I appreciate your support and your confidence. Serving with you is one of the great privileges of my life, and I hope you know that I will never take your trust for granted. Or as one of my predecessors, Gib Lewis, said almost 30 years ago, "The office you have bestowed upon me fills me with a deep sense of humility." We know that he didn't actually say that, of course, but it makes for too good of a story.

I want to welcome the families of our members who are here today. Our families don't just send us off to serve in this house; they serve with us. From parents who believed in us from day one, to spouses who pick up the slack, to children we tell good night over the telephone, it's their support that allows us to be here. I especially want to thank my own family: my parents, Joci and Joe; my

sisters, Lyn and Susan; our daughters, Robyn and Sara; and of course, Julie. I could not be more proud of Julie's service to this house. She makes members and your families feel welcome here. She helps turn the Capitol into a classroom for students who visit. And she gives many of us—especially me—the encouragement we need to make it through our longest days. Please join me in thanking her for all she does.

Now, our families also keep us humble. A few months ago, I told Julie that Dr. Zerwas and Dr. Oliverson had invited me to speak to a convention of their fellow anesthesiologists. Without skipping a beat, Julie looked at me and replied, "Well, Joe, I've sat through a lot of your speeches, and considering what anesthesiologists do for a living, I think you'll fit right in." And just so you know, I got the hint, and today I'm going to try to be brief.

I want to thank the members who put my name into nomination as well as Secretary Pablos and all of our guests who have helped us begin this session on the right note. And of course, I want to thank all of the other visitors here today. Whether you are supporters from back home or just engaged citizens, we're glad you've joined us.

To my fellow members, the Texans we represent have entrusted us with a solemn duty and a rare responsibility: a charge to provide leadership for this state over the next two years. Each of you is here because you belong here. Your constituents put you on this floor because you spoke to their concerns and earned their votes. In the months ahead, we will come to this chamber to deliberate thousands of your ideas and proposals. We will have moments of levity and tension and unity. We will disagree on some legislation and agree on much more. But what looms larger than any single bill is the set of core principles that I hope will guide our work. These principles form the foundation of our approach to governing. They transcend politics and personal ambitions because they speak to our common experiences as Texans and our shared vision as public servants. For example, we believe that our economic strength comes from a healthy and robust private sector. Our economy prospers when government stays out of the way. Low taxes and reasonable regulations, these are the Texas model. And with the 11th largest economy in the world, we know that the Texas model works. We believe that it's the private sector that creates opportunities, not the government, and certainly not the legislature. But we can encourage economic growth by setting and acting on the right priorities. If someone wants to invest in Texas, we should welcome them. This state should invite economic activity, not turn it away.

We believe in responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources. Government should be efficient and accountable. And perhaps most of all, government should be functional. It should work. For example, with the right reforms to our mental health system, we can improve millions of lives and save millions of dollars in our jails and emergency rooms. Sensible decisions today will reduce costs in the long run. So let's be cautious in our use of taxpayer dollars, but let's also be smart.

We believe that education is the key to our future. Nothing will take this state further than a well-educated workforce. Great local schools are the backbone of this state and the heart of many communities. More than five million students attend public schools, which cultivate a curiosity and a confidence that will carry those children through life. We want every campus to excel, but they need our help. Educators and this legislature should aspire to be partners, not adversaries. Our school finance system may meet the technical definition of legally constitutional, but parents and taxpayers know something different. They know that the system is broken, and they know that it's our job to fix it.

And finally, we believe that children should never have to live in fear of their own parents. Home ought to be a place of love and support, not abuse and violence. We've begun fixing Child Protective Services, but we are not yet done. We can all agree that protecting children is one of the state's basic and most important responsibilities. Traumatized children should not be sleeping in government office buildings because they have no safe home and no place else to go. This is Texas, and Texas should be better than that.

Our priorities will be the people's priorities. The core responsibilities of government, such as education and public safety, matter to Texans' daily lives, and they matter to this house. Some challenges will require more than one session to solve, but now is the time to start. Throughout this session, our shared principles will be tested and so will the goodwill that fills this chamber today. But Texans are watching, and we have an opportunity. We can show that there's still a place for thoughtful and inclusive leadership. We can show that elected officials still know how to solve problems. And we can show that when necessary, principled leaders still have the courage to compromise. Compromise has become a dirty word in politics, but in reality, it's how we find common ground to achieve the common good, and it's a good word in this house.

Making difficult decisions invites criticism. It comes with the territory. But I like to remember something I read last year about one of my favorite presidents and political heroes, George H. W. Bush. Long before he was President Bush, he was Congressman Bush from Houston. And in the late 1960s, he came under attack because he supported legislation aimed at ending racial discrimination in the housing market. But George Bush didn't back down. In fact, he described one critic this way: "He couldn't have been uglier and meaner. But that just made me more determined to do what was right."

Fifty years later, this is our time to do what's right and to conduct ourselves in the right way. There is a disconnect between the way we talk about politics in this country and the way that most Texans treat each other. The corrosive cynicism that dominates the public discussion of politics does not reflect the character of our people. The Texans we represent are kind and they are decent and they are charitable. They deliver meals to the hungry, comfort the sick, and look after their neighbors. Our constituents don't expect us to agree on every issue. They want us to defend our core beliefs, but they also want solutions. They want us to conduct ourselves with civility and respect—respect for each other and respect for the process of governing. That's what Texans do.



If you walk into a factory or a restaurant or a hospital, you will find citizens of different races, religions, and political beliefs working together every day. And that's what Texans should expect of us. So let's follow their example. Let's govern with the same sense of goodness, the same humanity and decency that we so clearly recognize in the people we represent.

And since I promised to be brief, and today is not a day to break promises, I want to wrap up by saying one more thing directly to you, my colleagues in the Texas House. We may not always agree on issues or approach, but we don't need to. I want all of us to represent our districts faithfully and successfully, and I am eager to help you however I can. I understand that you have chosen to invest your trust in me and that you take that decision seriously. I take it seriously also. It is a privilege to be your colleague and an honor to be your speaker. And as your speaker, I will advocate for this house, I will defend this house, and I will treasure every day that we serve together in this house.

I want to congratulate all of you on taking the oath of office today. And on behalf of Julie and our entire family, I want to thank you very, very much.

### **COMMITTEE APPOINTED**

The speaker announced the appointment of the following committee to notify the senate that the house is organized and ready to transact business: Gonzales, chair; Raymond, Phelan, J. Johnson, Burkett, Hinojosa, K. King, Minjarez, Zerwas, Muñoz, Ortega, and Romero.

### **ADDRESS BY THE GOVERNOR**

Speaker Straus recognized Representative Giddings who introduced the Honorable Greg Abbott, governor of the State of Texas, who addressed the house, speaking as follows:

Thank you very much. That was exceptionally kind of you; thank you for your very kind words. It is an honor to join with you as well as with your unanimously elected speaker of the house, Joe Straus. It is an honor to get to join all of you as we embark upon this new and historic legislative session. I'd like to welcome the new members to the Texas House of Representatives and to congratulate you on your elections. Also, I want to say welcome to the returning members of the Texas House. I look forward to working with you again, just like we did last session for a very successful legislative session.

Now, one thing that's always fun about these opening sessions is to get to look around and see not only the members but also so many family members sitting out there. I see Nadine sitting next to the dean of the Texas House of Representatives. It could be a wife or a husband. It could be a father or a mother. It could be a sister or a brother. It could be a son or a daughter. I'm proud that I have with me today my wife, the fabulous first lady of the great State of Texas, Cecilia Abbott. The point is this: Regardless of which of these titles that your family member may have, those titles are far more important than whatever political title any of us may ever hold. And it's families like yours, and families across the entire state of Texas, who depend upon your judgment as we embark upon this session.

We are called upon by the people of this great state to act with courage, to act with integrity and resolve, to forge an even broader path to prosperity for absolutely every Texan in this state. Now, I know that the public servants in this room as well as those in the chamber on the other side of the Capitol are up to that task because this is Texas, and Texas is exceptional. Scripture teaches that tribulations produce perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. The perseverance and character of the earliest Texans who fought for our independence gave birth to the hope of what has become the premier state in the United States of America. Generations of Texans have persevered through a variety of different types of tribulations with the typical Texas character that has always provided greater hope for the next generation—the hope that has made Texas the land of opportunity where anyone can come from anywhere and have the chance to succeed, the hope that led to the saying, "I may not have been born in Texas, but I got here as fast as I could."

As we gather on the threshold of yet another legislative session, we must never forget that the reason why Texas is so exceptional is because of the extraordinary people that we have the privilege to represent. And it says something about who we are as Texans, that people of all walks of life and of different backgrounds—some of whom may live almost a thousand miles apart from each other, people of both political parties—can come together to ensure that Texas retains its unique brand of exceptionalism. We may be from different political parties, but we unite under one Capitol dome in a cause that's bigger than any one person and bigger than any one political party. It's the cause that makes Texas far more than just a state. It's the cause that makes Texas a passion.

I pray that God blesses you and guides you during the next 140 days and that God forever blesses the great State of Texas.

### **COMMITTEE APPOINTED**

The speaker announced the appointment of the following committee to notify the governor that the house is organized and ready to transact business: Parker, chair; Anchia, Frank, Rose, Lambert, Longoria, Darby, Clardy, Perez, J. Rodriguez, Murr, González, Huberty, and Walle.

### **INTERPRETER FOR THE DEAF**

The interpretation of the proceedings of the house was provided today by Billy Collins Jr. and Shawn Whitley.

### **CAPITOL PHYSICIAN**

The speaker recognized Representative Howard who presented Dr. Tricia Elliott of Fort Worth as the "Doctor of the Day."

The house welcomed Dr. Elliott and thanked her for her participation in the Physician of the Day Program sponsored by the Texas Academy of Family Physicians.

Representative Geren moved that staff members employed by house committees at the end of the Eighty-Fourth Legislature continue to be employed by the house subject to available funding until all committee assignments have been made for the Eighty-Fifth Legislature.

The motion prevailed.

**HR 49 - ADOPTED**  
**(by Straus)**

The following resolution was laid before the house:

**HR 49**, In memory of Barbara "Babs" Nesbitt Miller, wife of State Representative Rick Miller.

**HR 49** was read and was unanimously adopted by a rising vote.

On motion of Representative Geren, the names of all the members of the house were added to **HR 49** as signers thereof.

**HR 48 - ADOPTED**  
**(by Straus)**

The following resolution was laid before the house:

**HR 48**, In memory of Barbara Lynn Stephenson, wife of State Representative Phil Stephenson.

**HR 48** was read and was unanimously adopted by a rising vote.

On motion of Representative Geren, the names of all the members of the house were added to **HR 48** as signers thereof.

The speaker recognized Representative Craddick who introduced Daniel E. Garcia, bishop, Diocese of Austin, who offered the benediction.

The speaker recognized members of the choral ensemble Conspirare who sang "Texas, Our Texas."

**ADJOURNMENT**

Representative S. Thompson moved that the house adjourn until 10 a.m. tomorrow in memory of the Honorable Robert Landis "Bob" Armstrong, the Honorable Gordon "Doc" Arnold, the Honorable Hamp Atkinson, the Honorable John Newhall Barnhart, the Honorable Leo Berman, the Honorable John Cooper Blankenship, the Honorable Chet Edward Brooks, the Honorable Richard J. "Dick" Burnett, the Honorable William Thomas "Bill" Clark, the Honorable Lawrence Dean Cobb, the Honorable David William Crews, the Honorable William Marshall "Bill" Elliott, the Honorable Benjamin Butler Ferrell, the Honorable Antonio C. "Tony" Garcia, the Honorable Chris Harris, the Honorable Dixon Wade Holman, the Honorable Ruben Wert Hope, the Honorable Edward P. Hughes Jr., the Honorable Herman Edward Lauhoff, the Honorable El Franco Lee, the Honorable James E. "Jim" Nugent, the Honorable Fred Ray Orr, the Honorable Johnnie Beverly Rogers, the Honorable E. L. Short, the Honorable Paul G. Silber, the Honorable Wayland Adams Simmons, the Honorable William

McKinnie "Bill" Sims, the Honorable Robert Leo "Bob" Strickland, the Honorable Jack Boynton Strong, the Honorable Arthur "Buddy" Temple, the Honorable Ken VanderVoort, and the Honorable James Claude "Jim" Wright.

The motion prevailed.

The house accordingly, at 1:56 p.m., adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.