

# HOUSE JOURNAL

---

---

EIGHTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION

---

---

## PROCEEDINGS

FIRST DAY — TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2023

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 12:08 p.m., the Honorable Jane Nelson, 115th secretary of state of the State of Texas, called the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Eighth Legislature of the State of Texas to order.

Secretary Nelson recognized the Most Reverend David L. Toups, bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Beaumont, Beaumont, who offered the invocation as follows:

God, our loving Father, creator of all goodness, we invoke your Holy Spirit of wisdom and guidance upon this legislative session and upon all those called to serve the common good. We ask you to bless the great State of Texas and all those entrusted to our care. We pray for peace in our hearts and peace in our world in these challenging times. And so we close with the words often attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi, a great patron of peace: God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things that we can, and the wisdom to know the difference. May your wisdom prevail upon us and allow us to be your instruments of peace in our community, you who live in reign forever and ever. Amen.

Secretary Nelson recognized Talin Nalbandian from the Butler School of Music at The University of Texas at Austin, who sang the national anthem.

Secretary Nelson recognized the Honorable Hugh Shine of Bell County who led the house in the pledge of allegiance to the United States flag and the Honorable Matt Shaheen of Collin County who led the house in the pledge of allegiance to the Texas flag.

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

The Honorable Jane Nelson, secretary of state of the State of Texas, addressed the house, speaking as follows:

Good afternoon and welcome to the 88th Texas Legislature. For those of you who don't know me, I served in the chamber over on the east side of the Capitol for 30 years. Now, being here with you today in the house chamber brings back so many memories. Of course, I witnessed some of my bills die a very colorful death in this chamber, as I'm sure some of you have, but it's also a place where I forged some of the best friendships and partnerships of my career. As Finance chair, I had the privilege of working on the state budget with four amazing

Appropriations chairs: Chairman Pitts, Chairman Otto, Chairman Zerwas, and Chairman Bonnen. I've teamed up with many of you, who are truly amazing subject matter experts on your key issues, to pass good legislation over the years.

I want to share just one memory that really stands out. When we were working to establish the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas there was a key vote here in the house to save that bill—which I think had nine lives, those of you who were around back then. And I heard it was in trouble and I ran over from the senate and went straight to Ms. T. and Chairman Morrison for help and we gathered all of the women of the house together and we went from all the way in the back to the front of the room desk by desk. Ms. T., you remember this? And we counted votes, and by the time we got up to the front to Speaker Craddick, we said we got the votes and we passed that bill, you remember, it was so awesome. And so to be here in the house with you today—that was a special bill, that was a special time—and so it's special for me to be standing up here with you.

I want to extend a warm congratulations to each member of the house and to your families as you begin a new chapter in your service to the Texans you represent. Thirty years ago, I sat exactly where you are on my first opening day of the legislative session with my husband and my five children feeling the excitement in the chamber and hearing the buzz around the Capitol building and anxiously awaiting what the session had in store for us. You are surrounded by some new faces this year, including 26 new members of the Texas House. Yes, welcome! And we have five new members of the senate. But we also have some seasoned veterans among us who have worked year after year, and in some cases decade after decade, to improve the lives for all Texans who call this state home. Many of you are fresh off the campaign trail where you had an opportunity to listen firsthand to concerns and hopes of the constituents that you now represent. Each of you brings a unique point of view, background, and expertise to this body. We have a legislature comprised of teachers and doctors and police officers and moms and dads and yes, even lawyers. You come from big cities and small towns and seashores and deserts, but no matter where you come from we are all Texans. And we have all come together for the next 140 days to work on behalf of our state. Now, there are going to be difficult moments, that happens every session. But remember this, as Texans we all agree on so much more than any differences we might have. I have great faith in all of you and I will be rooting for you all to have a successful session. So congratulations and good luck and let's get started.

**APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES**

Secretary Nelson announced the appointment of temporary officers and employees for the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Eighth Legislature of the State of Texas.

- Parliamentarians . . . . . Sharon Carter and Hugh L. Brady
- Assistant Parliamentarian . . . . . Thomas G. Samuels
- Chief Clerk . . . . . Stephen Brown
- Assistant Chief Clerk . . . . . Mark Cervantes

Journal Clerk . . . . . Jennifer Teigen Doran  
 Voting Clerk . . . . . Scottie Hagen  
 Sergeant-at-Arms . . . . . Michael Black  
 Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms . . . . . Kara Coffee  
 Doorkeeper . . . . . Anthony Hester  
 Reading Clerks . . . . . Kate Atwood and Haley Hilderbran  
 Committee Coordinator . . . . . Stacey Nicchio  
 Assistant Committee Coordinator . . . . . Damian Duarte  
 Executive Director, House Business Office . . . . . Steven D. Adrian  
 Assistant Director, House Business Office. . . . . Scott D. Siebert  
 Chaplains . . . . the Most Reverend David L. Toups, S.Th.D.; the Reverend Jakob N. Hurlimann, and the Reverend Fernando Ricaud  
 Honorary Pages. . . . . Mark Finnegan Phelan, Fitzpatrick Cunningham Phelan, Mary Ellen Beaver, William Lucas Johnson, Benjamin David Wittman, Camille Crossette McGaughy, Wyatt Taylor Watts, Poppy Marie Mitchell, Brendan Keller, Katherine Keller, Matthew Keller, David Keller, Addison Hahn, Carson Hahn, Lawson Hahn, Logan March, Madeline March, Noah Nelson, and Jonah Nelson.

**ROLL OF MEMBERS-ELECT SHOWING  
 DISTRICTS REPRESENTED**

Secretary Nelson directed the chief clerk to call the roll of members-elect of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Eighth 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	Bryan Slaton
District 3	Cecil Bell Jr.
District 4	Keith Bell
District 5	Cole Hefner
District 6	Matt Schaefer
District 7	Jay Dean
District 8	Cody Harris
District 9	Trent Ashby
District 10	Brian Harrison
District 11	Travis Clardy
District 12	Kyle Kacal
District 13	Angelia Orr
District 14	John Raney
District 15	Steve Toth
District 16	Will Metcalf
District 17	Stan Gerdes
District 18	Ernest Bailes
District 19	Ellen Troxclair
District 20	Terry M. Wilson
District 21	Dade Phelan

District 22	Christian "Manuel" Hayes
District 23	Terri Leo-Wilson
District 24	Greg Bonnen
District 25	Cody Thane Vasut
District 26	Jacey Jetton
District 27	Ron Reynolds
District 28	Gary Gates
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	Janie Lopez
District 38	Erin Elizabeth Gámez
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	Erin Zwiener
District 46	Sheryl Cole
District 47	Vikki Goodwin
District 48	Donna Howard
District 49	Gina Hinojosa
District 50	James Talarico
District 51	Maria Luisa "Lulu" Flores
District 52	Caroline Harris
District 53	Andrew S. Murr
District 54	Brad Buckley
District 55	Hugh D. Shine
District 56	Charles "Doc" Anderson
District 57	Richard Hayes
District 58	DeWayne Burns
District 59	Shelby Slawson
District 60	Glenn Rogers
District 61	Frederick Frazier
District 62	Reggie Smith
District 63	Ben Bumgarner
District 64	Lynn Stucky
District 65	Kronda Thimesch
District 66	Matt Shaheen
District 67	Jeff Leach

---

District 68	David Spiller
District 69	James B. Frank
District 70	Mihaela Elizabeth Plesa
District 71	Stan Lambert
District 72	Drew Darby
District 73	Carrie Isaac
District 74	Eddie Morales
District 75	Mary E. González
District 76	Suleman Lalani
District 77	Evelina "Lina" Ortega
District 78	Joe Moody
District 79	Claudia Ordaz Perez
District 80	Tracy O. King
District 81	Brooks Landgraf
District 82	Tom Craddick
District 83	Dustin Burrows
District 84	Carl Tepper
District 85	Stan Kitzman
District 86	John T. Smithee
District 87	Four Price
District 88	Ken King
District 89	Candy Noble
District 90	Ramón Romero Jr.
District 91	Stephanie Klick
District 92	Salman Bhojani
District 93	Nate Schatzline
District 94	Tony Tinderholt
District 95	Nicole Collier
District 96	David Cook
District 97	Craig Goldman
District 98	Giovanni Capriglione
District 99	Charlie Geren
District 100	Venton C. Jones
District 101	Chris Turner
District 102	Ana-Maria Ramos
District 103	Rafael M. Anchía
District 104	Jessica González
District 105	Terry Meza
District 106	Jared Patterson
District 107	Victoria Neave Criado
District 108	Morgan Meyer
District 109	Carl O. Sherman
District 110	Toni Rose
District 111	Yvonne Davis
District 112	Angie Chen Button
District 113	Rhetta Andrews Bowers

District 114	John Bryant
District 115	Julie Johnson
District 116	Trey Martinez Fischer
District 117	Philip Cortez
District 118	John Lujan
District 119	Elizabeth "Liz" Campos
District 120	Barbara Gervin-Hawkins
District 121	Steve Allison
District 122	Mark Dorazio
District 123	Diego Bernal
District 124	Josey Garcia
District 125	Ray Lopez
District 126	E. Sam Harless
District 127	Charles Cunningham
District 128	Briscoe Cain
District 129	Dennis Paul
District 130	Tom Oliverson
District 131	Alma A. Allen
District 132	Mike Schofield
District 133	Mano DeAyala
District 134	Ann Johnson
District 135	Jon Rosenthal
District 136	John H. Bucy III
District 137	Gene Wu
District 138	Lacey Hull
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	Christina Morales
District 146	Shawn Nicole Thierry
District 147	Jolanda Jones
District 148	Penny Morales Shaw
District 149	Hubert Vo
District 150	Valoree Swanson

A quorum was announced present.

### **OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED**

Secretary Nelson directed the chief clerk to administer the constitutional oath of office to the members-elect of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Eighth 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, that I will faithfully execute the duties of the office of member of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Eighth 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."

**MOTION IN WRITING  
TEMPORARY RULES**

The Honorable Todd Hunter of Nueces County offered the following motion in writing:

Madam Secretary:

I move to adopt the House Rules of Procedure from the 87th Legislature, excepting Rule 16, as temporary rules.

Hunter

The motion was read and prevailed.

**MOTION IN WRITING  
AUTHORIZING FLOOR PRIVILEGES**

The Honorable Will Metcalf of Montgomery County offered the following motion in writing:

Madam Secretary:

I move that, pending the election of the speaker, all individuals other than members of the house of representatives, members of their families, the secretary of state, temporary officers and their staffs, and approved guests be barred from the floor of the house of representatives inside the railing.

Metcalf

The motion was read and prevailed.

**MOTION IN WRITING  
PROVIDING FOR NOMINATION  
AND ELECTION OF THE SPEAKER**

The Honorable Todd Hunter of Nueces County and the Honorable Armando Walle of Harris County offered the following motion in writing:

Madam Secretary:

I move that, in accordance with Sections 9(b) and 11, Article III, Texas Constitution, and the laws of the State of Texas, the House of Representatives of the 88th Legislature proceed to elect a speaker of the house of representatives 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 each member who desires to make a nomination. The order in which members shall proceed to make a nomination shall be determined by lot.

(b) Each member recognized for this purpose shall immediately advance to the microphone at the reading clerk's desk 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.

(d) The secretary of state shall recognize at any time a member whose name has been placed in nomination for the purpose of withdrawing as a nominee. A member who withdraws is not considered a nominee.

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) Not more than five seconding speeches shall be allowed for each nominee.

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

SECTION 3. VOTING PROCEDURES; VOTING MACHINE. (a) All votes shall be record votes, taken using the voting machine, with the vote of each member entered in the House Journal.

(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 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. 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 motion. 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 5. OATH. (a) After the election, the secretary of state shall:

(1) appoint a committee of members to escort the speaker-elect to the speaker's rostrum for the purpose of taking the constitutional oath of office by the speaker-elect; and

(2) direct the administration of the oath of office to the speaker-elect.

(b) The speaker shall take the chair immediately after taking the oath of office.

Hunter and Walle

The motion was read and prevailed.

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

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

Pursuant to the provisions of the previous motion in writing, Secretary Nelson drew lots to determine the order in which members would proceed to make nominations and seconding speeches and to determine the color of light on the voting machine indicating a vote for each nominee. It was determined that the name of the Honorable Dade Phelan of Jefferson County, who would be represented by the green voting light, would be placed in nomination first, followed by the name of the Honorable Tony Tinderholt of Tarrant County, who would be represented by the white voting light.

Secretary Nelson recognized the Honorable Cody Harris of Anderson County, who placed in nomination for speaker of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Eighth Legislature of the State of Texas the name of the Honorable Dade Phelan of Jefferson County, speaking as follows:

Madam Secretary, distinguished guests, members, and families, welcome to the Texas House. Members, it is my honor and privilege to stand before you in this historic chamber and place in nomination the name of the Honorable Dade Phelan, my colleague and dear friend, for speaker of the Texas House of Representatives.

Texans have bestowed on us, as members of this distinguished body, the tremendous responsibility of being their voice in state government for the next 140 days—and what a huge responsibility that is. One of the first and most important tasks we have before us is selecting a speaker to lead us. One who will do so with integrity, honesty, and a steady hand. These are all qualities we have seen demonstrated by Speaker Phelan, not only in the good times, but also in those that have been especially challenging.

Much has changed since we last gathered here two years ago. Our state's population has grown to over 30 million people with more moving here every day. But this blessing brings with it serious challenges, like updating and expanding our roadways, providing water security, and ensuring a fair and predictable regulatory climate that continues to attract new industry and jobs for our constituents. We are also faced with a bleeding and broken border, where we must find the balance between compassion and respecting the rule of law because Washington refuses to do so.

Over the last week we witnessed the culmination of decades of dysfunction in our nation's capital. Partisanship and petty political theater have come to personify our nation's political landscape and we know that there are powers on both sides of the political spectrum who want the same dysfunction for Texas. The revered Sam Houston, whose portrait hangs over my left shoulder, once said, "Texas will again lift its head and stand among the nations." It is my firm belief that Texas, and particularly the Texas House, stands as an example to the world of how a representative government is supposed to work. The best way for us to prevent our chamber from going down the dark and broken path of Washington, D.C., is to elect a leader who recognizes that this house and its future are far better served when we elevate members based on their knowledge, experience, and skills rather than basing every single decision on the party abbreviation following someone's name. That leader is Dade Phelan.

Dade Phelan has shown that passing legislation that reflects the will of the majority and operating the chamber in a fair manner are not mutually exclusive. You can and should do both. Leadership is participative, not directive. It is a partnership, not a dictatorship. We need a leader who will encourage the members of this body to vote their districts, offer everyone an equal seat at the table, even as calls to silence those who disagree with us grow louder. One who respects the rules, history, and process that make this distinguished body work. Dade Phelan has effectively led this house through some of the most challenging times in our state's modern history. In his first term as speaker, Dade successfully guided the house through the many complex legislative challenges brought by COVID-19. Then in February of 2021, the trajectory of the session was completely disrupted when the State of Texas experienced one of the worst winter weather events in its history. He led us through multiple special sessions,

and despite all that, under Speaker Phelan's leadership, we were able to emerge with a balanced budget, vital fixes to our state's power grid, stronger elections, better health care for mothers and babies, and the list goes on and on. That brings us to today. We start this session with \$32.7 billion in revenue surplus, a diverse new class of members, a fresh set of ideas, challenges facing our constituents, and an opportunity to elect a leader who will ensure that we are given the tools to perpetuate the Texas miracle. Members, Dade is many things: a successful businessman, a loving husband and father, a dedicated state representative, and friend to us all. He has proven his leadership in good times and bad. He places a premium on fairness and respect for the process and I am certain that he is the right man for the job. Madam Secretary and members, it is my great honor and privilege to nominate the Honorable Dade Phelan to continue serving this great and distinguished institution as speaker of the Texas House of Representatives. Thank you.

Secretary Nelson recognized the Honorable Bryan Slaton of Hunt County, who placed in nomination for speaker of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Eighth Legislature of the State of Texas the name of the Honorable Tony Tinderholt of Tarrant County, speaking as follows:

I am honored to be up here nominating my friend, Representative Tony Tinderholt, to be our next speaker of the Texas House.

Last week, America witnessed the four most transparent days in the halls of Congress in modern history, where we saw actual debate and discussion. That only happened because conservatives were unwilling to rubber stamp an establishment leader with a history of working with democrats to stop conservative policy. Another thing you might have noticed was that the democrats in Congress stood together, consistently in opposition to Speaker McCarthy. Not one democrat broke rank to vote for a republican.

In Texas, we do things a little differently. Our speaker courted democrats to get his position, gave them chairmanships, and protected them from punishment when they fled to D.C. And today, every single one of them will be voting for his leadership in this chamber. Some will claim this is good bipartisanship, but it's actually just a powerful consolation prize for losing elections. We have passed some good republican bills over the last several years. When we pass conservative legislation, I am told things like, "We need to take a little break if this house is going to stay together".

To my democrat colleagues, you're brilliant. You've created an environment where republicans believe we can only get a few wins each session. We then spend most of our time reflecting on the joy of our few wins instead of the cost of our failures. Did we end most abortions in Texas? Yes. Did we finally pass partial constitutional carry? Yes. But there are other things we must consider: Can children be forced by their parents to go through barbaric gender reassignment surgeries and procedures? Yes. Did many of our constituents' property tax bills go up? Absolutely. Are young children being sexualized in public schools or at drag shows? Yes. Are millions of illegals flooding across our state's open border? Yes.

At some point we need to realize we are settling for just enough wins to get re-elected. We cannot afford to operate that way any more. It is time for republicans to take the lead, to actually implement the conservative policies that the people are demanding. We have a lot to do, and the eight GOP legislative priorities are only the bare minimum that we have to accomplish this session.

If you know Representative Tinderholt, you know he's honest, he will always shoot you straight, and he will actually allow a debate on all the policies that were on your push cards during campaign season. The answer is clear, and I'm grateful Representative Tinderholt has given us a chance to change the way this chamber operates.

Every one of you worked very hard to get here, with the support of the people of your district. And to the new members: The moment you start letting other representatives here make you vote the way that they want, you've handed away power that the people in your district gave you and you alone. Thank you and God bless.

Secretary Nelson stated that nominations were closed and recognized the Honorable Angie Chen Button, who seconded the nomination of the Honorable Dade Phelan, speaking as follows:

Thank you, Madam Secretary, and congratulations. My dear colleagues, most of us arrived here today knowing how to juggle. We try to balance our personal lives and careers with the added responsibility of serving the diverse needs of our constituents. While some of the big headline grabbing issues dominate conversations, there are hundreds of less flashy issues impacting our constituents' daily lives. Juggling a lot of balls gets challenging when people keep tossing you more balls. Well, sometimes it can feel like this is a game of dodgeball. Well, a few sessions ago Dade Phelan chaired the State Affairs Committee. While on the house floor I saw him walking this way. He came to talk to me about his bill, and he heard that a city in my district did not like it. Guess what? He said, "Angie, I completely understand if you are not able to support my bill." Wow, the powerful chairman said that to me. No pushy sales pitch just assuring me to use my best judgment to serve my district with all my heart. Since then, Chairman Phelan has become Speaker Phelan and he has presided over this body with the same respect for the office we all hold. A leader is someone who does the right thing, not because somebody is watching him or paying attention, but because this is the right thing to do. Leaders bring people together and look for solutions. They provide guidance and inspiration to those around them. Leaders empower others. Great leaders are respected because they respect others. How about that? Dade Phelan is that leader. I am so proud to second the nomination of Dade Phelan as our house speaker. God bless Texas; God bless this house.

The nomination of the Honorable Tony Tinderholt was seconded by the Honorable Nate Schatzline of Tarrant County, speaking as follows:

I am proud to nominate and second the nomination of Representative Tinderholt for speaker. I would like to point out that I am also proud of Speaker Phelan for the stances he has taken that line up with my values as well. Whether

that be the pro-life stance that he has taken or the pro-second amendment stance he's taken. I want to be very clear this vote from me is in support of my friend, someone who has supported me since the very beginning of my race. Representative Tony Tinderholt, a conservative fighter who has taken conservative stances time and time again and I trust his leadership. I look at Representative Tinderholt, I look at someone who votes his conscience. I look at someone who votes biblical, Christian values. I look at someone who takes the hard stances when others aren't willing to, and I look at someone who I can trust to do the right thing at all times.

I appreciate Speaker Phelan and I appreciate all that he has done for this state. But when I nominate Representative Tony Tinderholt, I do so as a friend who I know is going to stand in the gap and take the stances that our GOP has asked us to do, that our counties have asked us to do, and that our districts have asked us to do. My district specifically, has asked me to take a stand on the GOP priorities, and I know Representative Tinderholt will do just that. I believe that chairmanships should go with the majority party. I believe that we must take strong stances so that we can get strong conservative legislation done, and I trust that Representative Tinderholt will do just that. So I am proud to second the nomination of Representative Tony Tinderholt.

The nomination of the Honorable Dade Phelan was also seconded by the Honorable Tracy King of Uvalde County, speaking as follows:

Good afternoon, Madam Secretary, members of the house, family, and guests. It is indeed an honor and a privilege to be with you here today. I've got to tell you that I've heard a lot of seconding speeches in my career and I always wonder, "Where do they find these people?" And then today I'm standing in front of you and I'm still wondering, "Where did they find these people?" I've served with five speakers—and Dade Phelan gets it. He understands what the job description is. He's been a gubernatorial appointee, a staffer, a member, and a speaker.

Ladies and gentlemen, he didn't do that by himself. His wife, Kim Phelan, is a devoted mother of four boys, a great wife, and an absolutely incredible attorney, if y'all didn't know that. Thank you so much, Kim.

I got to know Speaker Phelan when he served as the vice-chairman of the house Natural Resources Committee and I could tell then that he had a good work ethic and he was truly dedicated to the people in the great state of Texas. But what most impressed me about Dade Phelan was a trip that he made to Uvalde, Texas last week to meet with the families of the 19 children and the two teachers that were killed in the Robb school shooting on May the 24th. He represents the district in East Texas that borders the Louisiana border. Uvalde is part of a district two-thirds of the way across the state that borders the country of Mexico. Very, very different places. He didn't have to do that. He didn't have to make that trip. It won't affect his reelection in East Texas. Or his reelection for Texas Speaker of the House—I was going to vote for him anyway. He made the trip across the state because he cared, and he wanted those families to know that he cared about what they were going through. It was not an easy meeting, I was there the whole time. They agreed on some things and they disagreed on some other things. But

throughout the entire meeting he was honest with them, he was up-front, answered those questions boldly, and it was impressive. Ladies and gentlemen, those are qualities that I find very, very admirable, particularly under those difficult situations. Now, we all come from different backgrounds and there's 150 of us that serve in this house together and Speaker Phelan believes in giving every member the opportunity to represent the folks that sent them here to do that. So Madam Secretary, for these and many other reasons, it is an honor and a privilege to second the nomination of Dade Phelan to be speaker of the house. Thank you and God bless you.

The nomination of the Honorable Dade Phelan was also seconded by the Honorable John Lujan of Bexar County, speaking as follows:

First of all, I want to thank all the members and families for being here and welcome them to our Texas Capitol. Right? I'm just proud to be here for that. I just want to let you know that I would not be here today serving my community were it not for the vision and encouragement of Speaker Phelan. He's a man of strong faith, values, and convictions. He's never afraid of hard work, and above all he puts Texas first in everything he does.

As members of the Texas House, we're on a big journey together. We will never be in this exact same body of 150 members, facing the same exact set of circumstances, debating the same exact issues, ever again. We're in a unique time and a unique moment in Texas history. Speaker Phelan, like the rest of us, shares the common goal of wanting to make our state better. And we can only get better, when we're debating and discussing some of the most pressing issues that are before us, by giving every member who wants to have a say in the process the opportunity and the encouragement to do so. I'll never forget the first time I met Speaker Phelan. He called me when I was struggling to make a critical decision about serving in the legislature. My phone rang, and it was the speaker. And I said, "Hey, what's up, Speaker?" I was playing around because I didn't know who the speaker was. I'm a retired San Antonio firefighter, and that's what we do, we play with each other a lot. So I thought someone was joking with me. But after a few minutes, when I realized it was actually him, I was so encouraged that a person like this was helping to lead our state. When I got off the phone, I knew I wanted to be a part of that vision of service that Speaker Phelan had articulated toward me.

It's for these reasons and many more that I support Speaker Phelan as our speaker for the 88th Texas Legislature, and I hope that you will join me in doing so. Thank you, and God bless the great State of Texas.

The nomination of the Honorable Dade Phelan was also seconded by the Honorable Toni Rose of Dallas County, speaking as follows:

I am so honored today to second the nomination of the Honorable Dade Phelan for speaker of the Texas House of Representatives. Like me, Dade believes that as members we can agree to disagree, and there is a path for each of us to vote our principles, do what is best for our districts, and still find time to respectively listen to one another.

One of the greatest examples of our ability to cross partisan lines for the greater good was seen last session, when this chamber overwhelmingly voted to support my legislation, **HB 133**, to extend postpartum medicaid coverage for new mothers from 60 days to 12 months after having a baby. To our new members, you will learn this the hard way real soon, but there's this pesky chamber on the other side that we are forced to do business with. Unfortunately, despite a large bipartisan coalition of house members voting in favor of that bill, the senate version lowered the threshold of coverage to six months rather than 12, thus casting into jeopardy the conditions of postpartum health coverage for Texans all together. The federal government only eased application requirements to states that expanded to a full year of coverage. Like policy-making, our health care system is arduous and complicated, so I'll spare you the nuts and bolts. The short version is because we ended up passing the senate version, this bill has not been implemented the way the house intended it to be. Our waiver to obtain federal funds now hangs in balance, and when the public health emergency ends soon Texas moms will once again be removed from health coverage when their baby is a mere two months old. We recognize that the fight for 12 months is not yet over, and that is due in no small part of the leadership of Dade Phelan, who has made 12 month extensions and the need to better support Texas' new moms and children the priority of the 88th Legislative Session.

Last session, he was right by my side every step of the way, advocating for my bill and helping it get over the finish line by making it the central focus of his Healthy Families, Healthy Texas legislative package. In the year and a half since then, Dade has not been quiet. He went on to lead our chamber into urging our centers for Medicare and Medicaid services to approve our application and to get it done without delay. In every speech, every interview, and conversation I have had with him he has reaffirmed to me his support for this legislation, and assured me we would get it done once again. He was supporting our effort long before *Dobbs*. So when he says it will get done once again, and made top priority this time around, I believe him.

Members, I share this story with you today because it's an example of the type of leader we need for this chamber. One who takes up our fights as his own, one who believes that good policy is just that—good policy, and one who is willing to continue the work until the work is done, the right way and not the easy way. Dade has filled his entire legislative career with the intention that this building works for everyone. As a staffer, then a representative, and eventually speaker, he recognizes that even though the needs of our districts and constituents may be different, they are still worthy of being heard. So no matter who you are, or where you come from, or the reasons you have for being here, Dade believes the members of this house deserve a fair chance to succeed. That is the type of leadership this chamber needs and that is why I am proud to support my friend and second the nomination of Dade Phelan as speaker of the Texas House.

Secretary Nelson recognized the Honorable Tony Tinderholt who addressed the house, in lieu of any additional seconding speeches, speaking as follows:

Members and fellow Texans watching at home and in the gallery, last session I voted for the speaker in hopes that he would change the broken system that led to conservative bills dying each session. I even hoped that during the interim things might get better. Instead, the tone and message to Texans got worse not better. I watched as our speaker refused to address republican delegates at the largest republican gathering in the nation, the Texas GOP convention. Many of you who told me you spent months trying to get a meeting with him to discuss various policies only to be ignored. Many of you who I talked to.

The speaker of the Texas House is supposed to be a servant-leader, one available to every single member of the body, not only accessible to a select few who exhibit the obedient behavior that leadership wants and needs. Every one of you knows that I consider you a friend. I don't like when we disagree and I try to be respectful. I treat everyone the same. Ask yourself, what do Texans need and deserve? I've realized that they need for me to fight to fix this broken system, to give these central policies a chance to pass. What we have been doing has not been working. The change needed is uncomfortable, but the cost of doing it right pales in comparison to the cost of this house repeating lost opportunities session after session. Our own congressman, Chip Roy, recently said, before he accomplished the changes to the rules at the U.S. Capitol, "The status quo remains because people want their power. They want their committee chairmanships, they want their gavel, they want the ability to control the power and the purse strings. But they don't want to look in the mirror to fundamentally change a broken town, a broken house, a broken body, and broken federal government." I look forward to working with each of you this session to advance a conservative agenda. I'm committed to this regardless of how today's vote goes. Many of you have told me you are worried what will happen if you vote for me. That kind of environment should not exist in this chamber.

In closing, I am committed to ensuring that every single republican legislative priority is debated on the house floor. Each of you should vote your district, but while passing the 1,000 bills that all of you have made a priority—and I agree, your bills are a priority—we can take a couple of days to debate the eight bills that the Republican Party of Texas has asked us to pass. I know there are chairmen in this chamber that I am convinced are conservative. There are members who will vote for Dade today who I believe want to pass conservative bills this session. And if last session, or during our special sessions, or during the interim, our current speaker was ready to lead on a bold conservative agenda, including the Republican priorities, then I would not be running today. I ask that you chair us this session so that we make Texas an even better place. I appreciate every single one of you and I actually appreciate Dade Phelan and his family for his service.

The nomination of the Honorable Dade Phelan was also seconded by the Honorable Shelby Slawson of Erath County, speaking as follows:

Members, as we assemble here today yoked with the great responsibility to lead Texas, I rise to second the nomination of Dade Phelan as our next speaker. Two years ago, we elected Dade to lead this chamber, to be the arbiter of our self-imposed rules, and an even, fair hand on the gavel. And that he has been.



Before that vote, I was just a know nothing freshman. So not knowing what to expect here, I asked Dade about various priorities and how the house and the speakership works. And he explained, as you've probably heard, the speaker's role is calling balls and strikes as the members create the plays and fight for our bills in here. Dade Phelan, gavel in hand, was a man true to his word. It is a messy job, the business of liberty. Thomas Jefferson once said, "Timid men prefer the calm of despotism to the tempestuous sea of liberty." Well, this Texas House is no respite for timid souls. Other chambers, maybe. D.C., maybe. But on any given day in here we tilt full tempest. Our colleague, Dade Phelan, is no timid man. From external forces of a pandemic to catastrophic weather, Dade rose to every challenge. Every member had the ability to show up in this building and fight for the ideas laid before this body. Under Dade's leadership, with him standing right here behind us, this house passed historic, long-sought and hard fought conservative legislation. Under Speaker Phelan, this house fearlessly led for our children, our Texas, and for our nation, and will do so again. Which is why I am proud to fully stand behind him as our next speaker. Thank you, God bless you, God bless Texas.

Pursuant to the provisions of the previous motion in writing, the members of the house proceeded to the casting of the votes (Record 1) for the speaker of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Eighth Legislature of the State of Texas.

For the Honorable Dade Phelan — 145

Allen	Frank	Klick	Raney
Allison	Frazier	Kuempel	Raymond
Anchia	Gámez	Lalani	Reynolds
Anderson	Garcia	Lambert	Rogers
Ashby	Gates	Landgraf	Romero
Bailes	Gerdes	Leach	Rose
Bell, C.	Geren	Leo-Wilson	Rosenthal
Bell, K.	Gervin-Hawkins	Longoria	Schaefer
Bernal	Goldman	Lopez, J.	Schofield
Bhojani	González, J.	Lopez, R.	Shaheen
Bonnen	González, M.	Lozano	Sherman
Bowers	Goodwin	Lujan	Shine
Bryant	Guerra	Manuel	Slawson
Buckley	Guillen	Martinez	Smith
Bucy	Harless	Martinez Fischer	Smithee
Bumgarner	Harris, C.E.	Metcalf	Spiller
Burns	Harris, C.J.	Meyer	Stucky
Burrows	Harrison	Meza	Swanson
Button	Hefner	Moody	Talarico
Cain	Hernandez	Morales, C.	Tepper
Campos	Herrero	Morales, E.	Thierry
Canales	Hinojosa	Morales Shaw	Thimesch
Capriglione	Holland	Morrison	Thompson, E.
Clardy	Howard	Muñoz	Thompson, S.
Cole	Hull	Murr	Toth
Collier	Hunter	Neave Criado	Troxclair
Cook	Isaac	Noble	Turner

Cortez	Jetton	Oliverson	VanDeaver
Craddick	Johnson, A.	Ordaz	Vasut
Cunningham	Johnson, J.D.	Orr	Vo
Darby	Johnson, J.E.	Ortega	Walle
Davis	Jones, J.	Patterson	Wilson
Dean	Jones, V.	Paul	Wu
DeAyala	Kacal	Perez	Zwiener
Dorazio	King, K.	Phelan	
Dutton	King, T.	Plesa	
Flores	Kitzman	Price	

For the Honorable Tony Tinderholt — 3

Schatzline  
Slaton  
Tinderholt

Present, Not Voting — 2

Hayes  
Ramos

### STATEMENT OF VOTE

When Record No. 1 was taken for election of the speaker, my vote failed to register. I intended to vote for the Honorable Dade Phelan.

Hayes

Secretary Nelson declared the Honorable Dade Phelan of Jefferson County to be the duly elected speaker of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Eighth Legislature of the State of Texas.

### COMMITTEE APPOINTED

The chair announced the appointment of the following escort committee for Speaker-elect Dade Phelan: Smith, chair; Campos, Gates, Gervin-Hawkins, Hefner, Hernandez, Jetton, Leach, Manuel, Meyer, Oliverson, and Patterson.

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

Speaker-elect Phelan was recognized at the speaker's rostrum.

The Honorable Dade Phelan of Jefferson County took the constitutional oath of office as speaker of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Eighth Legislature of the State of Texas, which was administered by the Honorable Jeff Branick, county judge of Jefferson County, as follows:

"I, Dade Phelan, do solemnly swear, that I will faithfully execute the duties of the office of speaker of the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Eighth 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."

Secretary Nelson recognized the Honorable Morgan Meyer of Dallas County who introduced family members of Speaker Phelan: his wife, Kim; his sons, Ford, Mack, Hank, and Luke; his parents, Janey and Michael; and his siblings.

### **ADDRESS BY THE SPEAKER**

Secretary Nelson introduced the Honorable Dade Phelan, speaker of the House of Representatives, who addressed the house, speaking as follows:

Good afternoon and welcome to the first day of the 88th Texas Legislature. Madam Secretary, the Honorable Jane Nelson, welcome back to the house. The west wing looks good on you, but it seems like senators will do anything to get on the house floor these days. Thank you for being here to oversee today's proceedings as the first Texan in history to preside over an opening day ceremony in both the house and the senate. Congratulations, Madam Secretary. And to Cody, Angie, Tracy, Shelby, John, and Toni, thank you. I hope to live up to your support, and I cannot do this job without friends like you at my side.

After completing a regular session that was anything but regular, three special sessions, and traveling 30,000 miles this interim, I would like to start this address the way I like to start every day, which is thanking my wife Kim for still being my wife. In addition to being an amazing wife, she's a loving mother to our four boys, an accomplished attorney, an advocate for juvenile justice reform, a leader on mental health awareness and education, and I could go on for days. But what I cannot do is this job without your constant support. Thank you. I'd also like to thank my four sons: Ford, Mack, Hank, and Luke. Thank you, boys. I want to thank you for teaching me how to referee a conversation between people who care a lot about an issue. We don't have points of order back home, but a good knock down, drag out fight over the Xbox is pretty good training for being a speaker. And Luke and Hank had one two hours ago. Thank you for being the best kids a dad could ask for. And just like your mom, I cannot do this without your blessings, so thank you. My parents Mike and Janey, my six brothers and sisters, thank you for your love and support over the years. Growing up, if I had a giant gavel like I do now, I would be an only child today. They're also the ones with the real big foreheads, too. I get criticized for my forehead but I inherited it from my family.

As I look out upon this distinguished gathering, I see 149 people. Ordinary Texans who are eager to get to work on extraordinary things. I am grateful for the majority of you who have honored me with your vote, but I am proud to represent all of you as speaker of the 88th Legislature. I also see your beautiful families, friends, and supporters. Let us not forget the sacrifices they have made to get you where you are today. Texas appreciates you. Members, let's give them a round of applause.

For the newcomers here, our freshman class of 2023, congratulations. Words of caution, please do not confuse this body with the one in Washington, D.C. After watching Congress attempt to function last week, I cannot imagine why some want Texas to be like D.C. New members, you now are in the Texas House of Representatives, part of a historic assembly. One hundred years after the first

woman was elected to the Texas House, our membership now includes 45 women—the highest number ever. And all of us represent 150 unique populations, from the cities, the suburbs, and the countryside. One hundred and ninety-four thousand strong in each district. And while our districts are certainly unique, they have one thing in common, they have trusted us to be their voice. And that is what we will do for the next 140 days. One day at a time, one issue at a time, one bill at a time. All of that work will be rooted in one of the most fundamental and necessary elements of this institution, the Texas House rules. As the most deliberative body in this nation, our rules matter. My advice to new members is to know them, love them, and be certain we will enforce them. Because our rules keep the game fair, but they do not dictate the outcome. We will have divisions, every session does. But that division does not have to define us. Let the political fires that have raged compel us to come to the table for a solution, not flee from our responsibilities. There will be countless outside voices—not from your district, not from this state—that seek to control our conversation, and they will be plenty loud. But the conversations that matter to us, the conversations that matter to our constituents, happen in here, in this room; in the Texas House. We do our work together here, and when we do that, we might just be surprised to find out how much we have in common.

We can find our first patch of common ground in the most fundamental element of society, the family. If we are going to be a family-focused house, and I do hope we will be, we must take a long look at what matters to Texas families. Fortunately, everyone here has spent the better part of a year on the campaign trail, hearing directly from our constituents. And, like you, I've heard some very straightforward concerns from the families in my district. I've heard about the economy, inflation, difficulty in making ends meet, ever increasing property taxes that have led many to feel—year-in and year-out—they are renting their property from the government. Like them, I believe tax relief should be a priority. But time and time again, we have seen the legislature provide some form of property tax relief, but to make it lasting we must do something about runaway appraisals because taxpayers deserve better. My constituents also talked about the need for quality health care at a reasonable price for families and businesses. They appreciate the progress we made last session tackling the cost of prescription drugs and health plans, pricing transparency, improving outcomes for women and children, but they need us to do much more. So we're going to continue the momentum by giving patients greater control over their health care, as well as better access. In my travels, I also heard about Texans' desire for safe streets. During the 87th, we reset the national conversation on criminal justice. We showed it's possible to improve public safety while defending the rights of the accused, and offering second chances when deserved. We led the nation in decreasing our incarceration rates, reducing recidivism, and facilitating reentry. We have proven that you can be tough on violent criminals while also making the criminal justice system work better for non-violent offenders, and that is what we will continue to do. But members, we can work all day on these issues, but if rogue district attorneys will not uphold the law, what progress are we really making? It is time to reign them in.

Our constituents also want roads that can move them in a timely manner from their home to their job to their child's school to their place of worship. Texans want a reliable supply of water, resiliency from flooding, dependable energy, and high-speed internet across this great state. They want exceptional schools with exceptional teachers. With a once in a lifetime budget surplus, now is the time to put a down payment on the future of Texas. To make this down payment even more critical, over a thousand people move to Texas every single day. They do not bring these investments with them, members. We all serve different regions, but we all recognize these as common obligations. But members, perhaps we have no greater task ahead of us than protecting those who will carry on what we have started—the children of Texas. I created the Select Committee on Youth Health and Safety last session to examine the issues facing our children. The threats to their safety are all too real—child trafficking, violence in schools, bad actors seeking to exploit their innocence, and social media companies that prey on the insecurities of children leaving them vulnerable to exploitation, sexualization, and indoctrination. Members, we must stand up for the children of Texas. Teachers and parents alike want safer schools, and our kids deserve them. Last May, the lives of 21 Texans—teachers and children—were stolen when a gunman opened fire at Robb Elementary in Uvalde, Texas. We owe it to the memory of those children and teachers to make sensible, meaningful change. I want to thank the families of Uvalde for inviting me to meet with them just last week. Having heard from them directly, and taking into account the findings of our investigative committee, we have insights to inform our decision. This is going to be an especially tough conversation, but this body has proven capable of handling conversations like this in the past. I am confident we will do so again.

As we work to make Texas a better place to raise a family, we must also acknowledge there is true suffering in society, and we have to make those things better for those families in the toughest situations. The most important thing to do certainly is to ensure our economy continues to generate quality jobs and meaningful wages. After all, an opportunity to provide for one's family is a powerful motivator no matter where one is in life. At the same time, let us not forget people who need more than a job. Even with a vibrant economy, a single parent who can work to afford child care, health care, transportation, and housing is indeed rare. How can we improve their lives and their children's futures? Tax-free diapers, wipes, and other child care supplies is a great start, and so is ensuring health coverage for new moms that lasts not sixty days, not six months, but an entire year.

Starting today I represent Jasper County. Last week, I read a story about the local county hospital joining the 60 percent of rural Texas hospitals that no longer deliver babies. Mothers in rural areas now face hour long drives for basic services. We should not leave this session without a firm commitment to reversing this trend, because in my dictionary, the definition of pro-life includes ensuring access to affordable health care for all, especially Texas mothers and their babies. And to show the Texas House is committed to the maternal health of

our own staff this session, I am proud to announce we are offering additional resources to guarantee 12 full weeks of maternal and paternal leave for those working for this chamber this session.

Members, our names may be on the door, but the men and women who serve in our Capitol and our district offices are the ones who do the heavy lifting. We must provide an environment that respects them and recognizes their value. With rapid inflation, let's also retain them by finally increasing their salaries. Show Mr. Schaefer voting aye. Making things better for all Texas families is how we deliver on the limitless potential for our state, in every area. From gainful employment to public safety, that includes border security, which is certainly on the minds of our members, but especially those who represent border communities. We can all agree our border towns have been bearing the brunt of Washington's failed immigration policies, some going as far as declaring themselves to be in a state of disaster. It is a legal and humanitarian crisis. Every budget I've voted for has poured millions, now billions of dollars into the gap between federal policies and realities on the ground. As stewards of every budget dollar we must ensure our strategy not only fits realities on the ground but is truly measurably effective. We must also acknowledge additional threats posed by a porous border: more than 1,600 Texans died from fentanyl overdoses in 2021. That is 1,600 too many. Before Texas families get that heartbreaking call, members we must stop the cartels in their tracks, and we will.

Members, though we face many challenges this session, there will be even more opportunities. The work is hard, but it is worthwhile. The work is demanding, but it is noble. The work is necessary, and because we have the privilege of doing it for the people of Texas, I know we will get it done together. It is a privilege to serve as a member of this distinguished body, and I am once again humbled by the opportunity to be your speaker. Thank you for this enormous honor, thank you for serving this great state. God bless you all, and God bless Texas.

### **MOTION IN WRITING AUTHORIZING COMMITTEES**

The Honorable Will Metcalf of Montgomery County offered the following motion in writing:

Mr. Speaker:

I move to authorize the speaker to appoint two committees of five members each, one to notify the senate, and one to notify the governor that the house is organized and prepared to transact business.

Metcalf

The motion was read and prevailed.

### **COMMITTEES APPOINTED**

The speaker announced the appointment of the following committee to notify the governor that the house is organized and ready to transact business: E. Thompson, chair; Allison, Guillen, Noble, and Swanson.

The speaker announced the appointment of the following committee to notify the senate that the house is organized and ready to transact business: K. Bell, chair; Bailes, Dean, Dutton, and Guerra.

### **HOUSE AT EASE**

At 2 p.m., the chair announced that the house would stand at ease pending arrival of the governor.

The chair called the house to order at 2:08 p.m.

### **HOUSE NOTIFIED**

A committee from the senate was announced at the door of the house and, being admitted, notified the house that the senate is organized and ready to transact business.

### **GOVERNOR NOTIFIED**

The committee appointed to notify the governor that the house is organized and ready to transact business reported that they had performed the duty assigned to them.

### **SENATE NOTIFIED**

The committee appointed to notify the senate that the house is organized and ready to transact business reported that they had performed the duty assigned to them.

### **ADDRESS BY THE GOVERNOR**

Speaker Phelan introduced the Honorable Greg Abbott, governor of the State of Texas, who addressed the house, speaking as follows:

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you very much for your warm welcome. Congratulations to you on your reelection and re-selection as speaker of the house of the great State of Texas.

I'm honored to be joined today by the fabulous First Lady of Texas, Cecilia Abbott. I'm also extraordinarily proud to be joined in this chamber by somebody who has already made such a terrific difference for the State of Texas, but has now launched into another pathway to do even more for our great state. That is our new Secretary of State, Jane Nelson. You know, typically a speaker is not supposed to apologize, but I apologize a little bit. Me and Charlie Geren—he's napping over there—we were at the game last night, I'm still wearing purple, and I think I went to bed at something like five o'clock with a tired voice. Yelling made no difference to the Georgia Bulldogs last night, I can tell you that much. But listen, I'm proud any time Texas is represented for being the very best, whether it be college football or economics or whatever. And so win, lose, or draw, I'm extraordinarily proud of TCU representing our state in the National Championship game.

I want to start out by saying congratulations to all of those who are newly elected to the Texas House of Representatives. I know, and I hope you know, that it is a remarkable accomplishment on your part. You've been through a crucible that you may never have experienced before. Winning people to vote for you,

being attacked, going through the challenges of getting people to elect you to represent them, representing the great State of Texas. All that hard work, all of the effort you put in got you to this moment and to the seat that you're in today. But to put it in context, all it really did was get you to the starting line. The process begins today for you to embark upon your service for your constituents, reflecting their ideologies, their preferences, to make sure that their voices will be heard through you on the Texas House floor. I also want to congratulate those who were reelected. Think about this concept: You've been here. You've voted here. You've worked here. You've sweat in here and when you went through the process of getting reelected, that was a reaffirmation by your constituents; thanking you for the job that you've done, saying that, "You've done such a good job we want you to go back and represent us again." A tremendous honor all the way around, so I'm proud of all of the members of the Texas House of Representatives for going through what you did go through to make it to this moment today. I want you to know, having been at this dais for multiple sessions now as we embark upon a new session, I have never been more excited about the beginning of a session than I am this year and there's several reasons for that. One is, more than any other year, we are situated with an extraordinary opportunity, to not only address the needs and challenges of our fellow Texans, but also to advance both the state and the lives of our fellow Texans more than any other session that we've ever had. Second, we are blessed with a once-in-a-generation opportunity, to put our state on a course of unassailable excellence for generations to come. One of the reasons, that all of you are well informed about why we are situated that way, is because of the \$32.7 billion surplus that we have. But let's be clear about a couple of things. First, who is responsible for that? The people who are responsible for that budget—they are the hard working men and women and working families in this state who sweat and toil to ensure that they're earning a good living, contributing back to the state through their taxes. They are the reason why we have that budget surplus, that budget surplus is because of taxpayers in the State of Texas.

There is another reason—Texas and our policies. They are attracting so many people a year from other states. Once again this past year, Texas was number one in the nation for the most new people coming into our state from other states. It's been that way as long as I've known. We have more people coming here adding to our economy than any other state, but we cannot overlook a third reason why we have the budget surplus that we do. It is owed mostly to the taxpayers of the State of Texas, but know this—that we, you, have implemented good stewardship, with policies that made sure that we would have a budget surplus. Not every state can say that. In fact, as we gather here today, the State of California, while Texas has a more than \$32 billion surplus, California has more than a \$20 billion deficit. While we have our surplus, the governor of New York is asking the federal government for money to help them in their state. I heard a commentator with a public policy organization on TV today in New York, who is a former member of the state legislature in New York, saying that one of the issues that the governor of New York is most concerned about is the fact that so many people are fleeing the State of New York. That's causing a



budget problem for their state. That's not a problem that we have in Texas. In Texas, we attract people here and we keep people here. You know, you hear all this talk about how Texas is number one for attracting new people, there's another number along those lines you need to know about—Texas is known as the stickiest state in the United States. What does that mean? That means Texas ranks number one with retaining those who are born and raised here more than any other state. If you're born a Texan, by God, you love being a Texan and you want to stay in the great State of Texas.

Now, I'll tell you one last reason why I am very excited for this session. I listened to the outstanding remarks that were just presented to you by your speaker and in those remarks were contained a broad outline of prolific issues that must be addressed this session. I can tell you that as we embark upon this session, I think there is a greater coalescence among both chambers, among all the leadership, about not only what the issues are but also what the solutions to those issues are. What that means is that we start out in a perfect position to have an extraordinarily successful session that will end in 140 days from today. So as we embark upon this profound effort, I wish you godspeed and I ask that God continue to bless the great State of Texas and that Texas remains the greatest state, in the greatest country, in the history of the world. God bless you all.

**MOTION IN WRITING  
AUTHORIZING CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT  
OF COMMITTEE STAFF**

The Honorable Will Metcalf of Montgomery County offered the following motion in writing:

Mr. Speaker:

I move that staff members employed by house committees at the end of the 87th Legislature continue to be employed by the house subject to available funding until standing committee assignments have been made for the 88th Legislature.

Metcalf

The motion was read and prevailed.

**INTERPRETER FOR THE DEAF**

The interpretation of the proceedings of the house was provided today by Shawn Whitley and Shelby Mitchusson.

**CAPITOL PHYSICIAN**

The speaker announced Dr. Emily Briggs of New Braunfels as the "Doctor for the Day."

The speaker recognized Talin Nalbandian from the Butler School of Music at The University of Texas at Austin, who sang "Texas, Our Texas."

The speaker introduced the Most Reverend David L. Toups, bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Beaumont, Beaumont, who pronounced the benediction as follows:

I'll end with the beautiful and brief benediction that God gave to Moses, the great law giver, and told his brother to bless the people thus: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. La bendición de Dios todopoderoso, Padre, Hijo, y Espíritu Santo sobre ustedes y permanezca para siempre. And the people said, Amen.

### ADJOURNMENT

The Honorable John Kuempel of Guadalupe County moved that the house adjourn until 10 a.m. tomorrow in memory of the Honorable Bill W. Barton, the Honorable Jerry Beauchamp, the Honorable Bennie Bock II, the Honorable Frank Calhoun, the Honorable Joe Barnett Cannon, the Honorable Donald M. Cartwright, the Honorable Sam Forse Collins, the Honorable C.C. "Kit" Cooke, the Honorable Rick Crawford, the Honorable Frances "Sissy" Farenthold, the Honorable Dave Finney, the Honorable Dan Flynn, the Honorable Martin Garcia, the Honorable Toby Goodman, the Honorable Bill Haley, the Honorable O.H. "Ike" Harris, the Honorable Samuel Hudson III, the Honorable Libby Linebarger, the Honorable James Steele Moore, the Honorable John H. Poerner, the Honorable Pike Powers, the Honorable Tom Ramsay, the Honorable Randall H. Riley, the Honorable Froy Salinas, the Honorable Robert "Bob" Salter, the Honorable William Thomas Satterwhite, the Honorable Henry Stollenwerck, the Honorable David Swinford, the Honorable Bob Turner, the Honorable Tom C. Waldrop, the Honorable Larry Warner, the Honorable Sarah Weddington, and the Honorable Joe Wyatt Jr.

The motion prevailed.

The house accordingly, at 2:28 p.m., adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

---

### ADDENDUM

---

#### NAME DISPLAY REQUEST

Christian Manuel Hayes, District 22, requested to have his name displayed as Christian Manuel for the rosters for the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Eighth Legislature.

Claudia Ordaz Perez, District 79, requested to have her name displayed as Claudia Ordaz for the rosters for the House of Representatives of the Eighty-Eighth Legislature.