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Dan Patrick Shares His Vision for The Texas Senate

AUSTIN – Today, Dan Patrick, Texas Lieutenant Governor – elect, held a press conference where he shared his vision for the Texas Senate and the upcoming 84th Legislative Session.

“My mission this morning was to outline my vision for Texas - what the voters elected me to do, including 46% of all Hispanic voters in Texas in the general election,” said Patrick. “My message was clear and consistent in the primaries and the general on the issues that I would address if elected.

“As you know we received nearly 58% of the statewide vote in the general. The point is the people of Texas are very clear on the major issues they care about - border security, reducing taxes on homes and businesses, education, transportation, family and life issues, and second amendment rights.

“I’m committed to delivering on what the people of Texas have asked us to accomplish. However, as a former senator, I clearly understand, and respect the fact that it will be the senators that will achieve those goals and get the credit.

“By the end of the session, the senators will shape the specific public policy to achieve the goals that Texans want; that I want; and I believe the majority of the senate wants.

“The details will be worked out over the next 145 days. This is the purpose of a session. It’s the prerogative of the members to write the bills and pass the bills. We have great minds, great ideas, and great insight in our membership on the issues that face Texas. There will be many approaches to accomplish the goals I will address below. The members will come together to find the right solutions.

“I am counting on the Republicans to lead, and hope that the Democrats will join us in addressing the issues that many of their constituents also feel strongly about as evidenced by the election. Most of the issues I have highlighted should be bi-partisan issues.

“I am here to help guide and assist where I can. I serve the people of Texas as well as the members of the Senate.

“This is not a complete list of all we hope to do, I have seen a lot of good bills already filed that are not on this list, but these are some of the major issues I envision, and I believe the people of Texas want us to pass,” continued Patrick.

Budget:

- Pass a conservative budget that includes significant funding for both property tax cuts, and business tax cuts.
- Pass legislation to limit spending to no more than population and inflation, which also must be defined.
- Fund additional dollars to Women’s Health.

Border Security:

- Increase funding for border security that will continue to fund the increase of DPS personnel on the border and keep the National Guard in place for 2 additional years or as long as needed until DPS has more officers to position there.
- Support immediate funding so that the Guard stays on the border between March and the end of the fiscal year in August. Those funds were recently cut. The Guard and DPS are making a significant difference and our forces should not be pulled back in March.

Property Taxes and Business Taxes:

- A budget with significant dollars allocated for property tax and business tax relief will be passed. There are many ideas from increasing the homestead exemption, to cutting the appraisal rate, or changing the roll back rate, which in many ways accomplishes the same goal, but gives local entities the ability to fund local programs with a vote of the people. The key is we must not just give a tax cut, we must slow down the appraisal value growth as it relates to future taxes.
- On business taxes we can cut the rate of the business tax, increase the minimum floor, now at a million, before a business pays, reduce the inventory tax and business property taxes. Just like the tax cuts for homeowners, the lieutenant governor’s office will support what the senators will have put forward and pass as long as it reduces the burden on both home and business taxes.

Education:

- School choice to all students and not just the rich or mobile.
- Expand our school accountability program to expand our rating of school districts on an A-F basis as we passed last session to each campus. Parents have a right to know how their children's school is performing. If you want to bring about change to our schools, let the parent see C, D, or F on the marquee.
- Create achievement school districts in Texas that rescue failing schools and

parent trigger that give parents power to change their schools.

- Fund new reading programs so every child can read at grade level in the 4th grade, provide for needed remedial programs, expand Teach for American funding, and fund courses for Career Opportunities for middle school children.

Higher Education:

- Scholarships for math and science teachers. This is legislation that was passed in 2013 that has not been funded yet. We need to incentivize students to become math and science teachers.
- Fund more residency slots for medical students so we do not lose students to other states after we have paid for most of their medical education but don't have the residency slots available for them to train.
- Since we deregulated tuition over a decade ago, it has not worked - tuition has skyrocketed, quickly becoming out of reach for the average family. Colleges and Universities need to understand that the cost of college tuition is of great concern to Texans, and many in the Texas Senate. This issue will be addressed this session.

Transportation:

- Our budget will end the diversion of the gas tax, with the exception of the dollars that go to education as instructed in the Constitution. This will send nearly \$600 million more a year to roads. The diversion will decrease funding to DPS from the gas tax that we will replace.
- Pass legislation that will transfer some of the existing sales taxes on cars and trucks to roads.
- Expand the market for Texas' natural gas by encouraging the development of the natural gas vehicle market.

Public Integrity Unit:

- Our budget will continue not to fund the Travis County Public Integrity Unit. The money was vetoed last year. The Senate will look at other options for this unit. Suggestions are it should move to the Attorney General's Office, a special prosecutor, or revert back to the home county of the public official in question.

Last but not least:

Continue to protect life and family values, protect the 2nd and 10th amendment.

“It is a long list and a bold agenda, but the time is now to address these issues and I believe the Texas Senate is ready to move forward on these important issues,” said Patrick. “Again, my role is to guide and assist the senators who will chart the course, craft the language, and write the bills to accomplish these goals. If we can accomplish even 75% of this list, our senators will have completed one of the most

successful sessions in the history of our state. Personally I'm going for 100%," concluded Patrick.

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