

# DEMOCRATS FOR REFORM

## *2007 Legislative Agenda*

### ★ HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

- ★ Restore full funding of CHIP (HB 109 does not fully restore CHIP to pre-2003 levels)
- ★ Reform Medicaid eligibility (vague, unclear – cannot point to anything definitive)
- ★ Increase Medicaid reimbursement rate for health care providers (No leadership – Frew settlement was court ordered)
- ★ Ensure adequate “Personal Needs” allowance for seniors in nursing homes (Personal needs allowance is \$60, the same as it was in 2005)

### ★ EDUCATION

- ★ Oppose public school vouchers (Rep. Joe Heflin passed a rider on the budget prohibiting the use of state money for vouchers. Despite Rep. Guillen and Speaker Turner’s position on the budget conference committee, the rider was stripped out in conference).
- ★ Maintain the “Top 10%” rule for Institutions of Higher Education (It was maintained, but was achieved thanks to efforts of ALL Democrats).
- ★ Fund a cost of living adjustment for retired teachers (13<sup>th</sup> check voted unanimously, and 13<sup>th</sup> check is only a one-time payment).
- ★ Restore the TEXAS Grants scholarship fund (7,000 fewer students will receive TEXAS Grants than in 2003)
- ★ Repeal tuition deregulation (HB 2382 by Coleman was the sole piece of legislation this session repealing tuition deregulation)
- ★ Public education reform (Speaker Turner voted against an across the board teacher pay raise on the budget)

### ★ PUBLIC SAFETY & CRIMINAL JUSTICE

- ★ Enhance border security (Governor given more money to expand his powers)
- ★ Support alternatives to new prison construction (Speaker Turner spoke against the construction to new prisons yesterday)

## ★ ENVIRONMENT

- ★ Fund \$109 million for State Parks (Despite influential positions on Appropriations, parks funding is still in question, and no new funding for parks will be available until studies are done by private vendors)
- ★ Increase funding for vehicular emissions retrofit program (HB 1072 by Rep. Giddings never was even passed out of committee)

## ★ ELECTRICITY

- ★ Create safeguards against high utility rates (Despite Speaker Turner's position on the SB 482 conference committee, the Dunnam/Coleman amendment which guaranteed rate cut was stripped off in conference.)
- ★ Restore the System Benefit Fund (System Benefit Fund was not fully restored this session)

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