



STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**HELEN GIDDINGS**  
 P.O. Box 2910 • Austin, Texas 78768-2910

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**HELPFUL TOLL-FREE HOTLINE NUMBERS**

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| Adopt- A- Beach.....                                | 1-877-892-6278 | Texas Department of Public Safety:     |
| AFDC/Food Benefit Stamp Inquiry Hotline             | 1-800-448-3927 | • Missing Persons Hotline.....         |
| AFDC/ Food Stamp Complaint Hotline.....             | 1-800-252-9330 | • Motorcycle Safety.....               |
| Texas Department of Aging.....                      | 1-800-252-2412 | • Motorist Assistance.....             |
| Texas Department of Agriculture.....                | 1-800-835-5832 | Small Business Owner                   |
| Alternative Fuel Marketing.....                     | 1-800-642-5327 | Start-up Technical Assistance.....     |
| Attorney General's Office:                          |                | Workforce Commission:                  |
| • Consumer Protection.....                          | 1-800-621-0508 | • Labor Commission.....                |
| • Child Support.....                                | 1-800-252-8014 | • Commissioner.....                    |
| • Medicaid Fraud.....                               | 1-800-252-8011 | Division of Workers' Compensation..... |
| Texas Commission for the Blind.....                 | 1-800-628-5115 | Crime Stoppers Hotline.....            |
| State Comptroller.....                              | 1-800-252-5555 | Crime Victims' Comp Program.....       |
| Texas Dept of Licensing & Regulation.....           | 1-800-803-9202 | Governor's Office.....                 |
| Lottery Commission.....                             | 1-800-375-6886 | Home Health Care Hotline.....          |
| Nursing Home Complaints & Info.....                 | 1-800-458-9858 | DFPS Abuse Hotline.....                |
| Oil Spill Reporting.....                            | 1-800-832-8224 | Immunization Information.....          |
| Texas Parks & Wildlife.....                         | 1-800-792-1112 | Foster Care and Adoption.....          |
| Texas Dept of Protective & Regulatory Services..... | 1-800-720-7777 | Texas Department of Insurance.....     |

**GIDDINGS GIVES TEXAS WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS**



*"America stands for freedom, for justice, for democracy, and from that there must be no retreating. There must only be advancing, and you and I have responsibility to advance freedom, justice, and democracy... we can't minimize our responsibility."*

*-Helen Giddings*

Dear Friends and Neighbors of District 109:

On April 17, 2006, a special session convened with the charge of reforming the current system of funding public education and tax issues as mandated by the Texas Supreme Court.

There was diversity of opinion among the lawmakers as the legislature worked to make fair and equitable decisions that would provide top-quality education for every student in Texas public schools. A compromise was reached during the session, and while it doesn't meet all of the needs, certain provisions will assist to improve the quality of District 109 schools throughout Texas. I recognize that our work is not yet complete...and I am firmly committed to adequately funding our public schools and upgrading our teacher pay system.

District 109 has one of the highest percentages of homeowner rates in Texas. I was very pleased to support property tax relief for the citizens of District 109 and citizens throughout Texas. The school tax liability for a \$150,000 home will drop from \$2,250 to \$1,500. This is an annual savings of \$750.00. With this new legislation, the state's share of public school funding should increase from 38 percent to 50 percent. I have some concerns regarding the fact that all new revenue (from all sources) is dedicated to property tax. The vast majority of state revenues are already dedicated to specific purposes, giving the legislature very little flexibility in appropriating funds where they are most needed in the future. The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Child Protective Services, and services to the elderly continue to require attention and funding.

Education has always been one of my top priorities as a legislator. Few things are more important in a young person's life than a good education, regardless of where he or she lives or his or her circumstances. As a member of the Higher Education Committee, I am committed to making certain that a college education is affordable, accessible, and available for students who want to go to college. The future of our state, our prosperity, competitiveness, and economic viability are linked to the quality of education Texans receive. One of the best investments our state can make is in the education of our children.

There are many occasions that I meet and converse with friends and neighbors in District 109. I would like to take this special opportunity to thank each of you for allowing me to be your voice in the Texas House of Representatives. Please continue contacting my office with your issues and concerns, as this provides information that is most helpful in making critical decisions that are beneficial to the community and the State of Texas. I am deeply humbled and honored by your continued confidence in me, and I will continue to do my best to represent you in the future.

I wish everyone an enjoyable and safe summer.

Sincerely,

Helen Giddings

## THE TEXAS SUPREME COURT RULING

In 2005 the Texas Supreme Court declared the method by which Texas funds its public school system to be unconstitutional. The state was given until June 1, 2006 to find a legislative solution. The special session was called by Governor Rick Perry to address property tax reductions, and this was the legislators' focus.

**Giddings made sure the debate also addressed funding for education.** While property tax relief is important, educational funding is equally important. **We need to grant property tax relief while assuring our school system is adequately funded.** As a result of the narrow focus of the special session, we have met the June 1st deadline from the Texas Supreme Court regarding meaningful discretion and property taxes; however, other Texas Supreme Court warnings have not been addressed. The Texas Supreme Court stated that the public school finance system borderlines on inadequacy and unconstitutionality. **Giddings states, "when we don't make an adequate investment in our schools, we condemn ourselves to putting more money in prisons, welfare, and other programs."**

## EQUITY IN SCHOOL FINANCE

State Representative Helen Giddings voted for **House Bill 1** which changes the standards for school districts subject to recapture, thus saving many economically disadvantaged school districts millions. For example, next year, Dallas Independent School District was slated to be classified as a wealthy school district. As such, DISD would have been required to give \$42 million for recapture and redistribution by the state. This would have crippled programs in DISD which serves many economically disadvantaged students. A provision in **House Bill 1** allows DISD to keep \$42 million each year. **Other school districts in District 109— Lancaster, De Soto, Cedar Hill, Ferris, and Duncanville — will be moderately better off due to these provisions and others in House Bill 1.**



*Rep. Giddings discusses pending legislation with colleagues on the floor of the Texas House of Representatives.*

## INCENTIVE PROGRAMS FOR TEACHERS

In an effort to curb high school drop out rates and prepare students for higher education, **Giddings** voted to provide additional funding for incentive programs for teachers on campuses that are historically hard to staff. **These funds**

should be particularly beneficial to Dallas, Lancaster, Cedar Hill, Duncanville, De Soto, and Ferris school districts. **Giddings** wants to see more experienced teachers who are teaching in their area of certification on all campuses. **This legislation will provide \$275.00 for each high school student in order to help students to excel scholastically, totaling approximately \$20 million dollars for Southwest Dallas and surrounding area schools.**

## COLLEGE PREPAREDNESS

On May 6, 2006, **Giddings** hosted a college preparedness workshop in the southwest sector on the UNT- Dallas campus. This workshop successfully assisted high school seniors in District 109 in applying to Texas colleges and universities, and provided assistance in filling out financial aid and admissions forms in order to complete the admissions process. **Giddings seeks to help every student who desires a higher education to enroll.**

## STATE FUNDED PAY RAISES

**Giddings** voted to give teachers, counselors, librarians, and nurses a \$2,000 pay raise, with \$500 of this amount dedicated as non-taxable income for health care premiums. If these employees choose, they can set aside more of their income for health care premiums that would not be subject to taxation. **Giddings** worked for a larger pay raise, but the legislature reached a compromise on this amount.

## TUITION REVENUE BONDS GRANTED

**Giddings supported and urged passage of House Bill 153**, a provision that approved requests for tuition revenue bonds for many colleges and universities, including University of Texas Arlington, Texas Women's University- Denton Campus, University of Texas at Dallas, and University of North Texas at Dallas. Tuition Revenue Bonds are used to improve the facilities on campuses. These bonds are repaid by tuition increases assessed to students and funded by the state general appropriations fund.

Located in the southwest sector, **The University of North Texas at Dallas will be receiving \$25 million to build a second academic building.** Upon completion of expansion projects, **UNT- Dallas will be the only publicly funded four-year university within the Dallas city limits.** Currently, only upper-class courses are offered on campus. With the addition of this new building, all the classes necessary to complete a baccalaureate degree will be offered on campus. **This funding is being approved at a time when UNT- Dallas is growing and expanding to accommodate the needs of the increasing number of students.**

**The University of Texas at Dallas will be receiving \$12 million for laboratory research.** University research provides pharmaceutical and medicinal discoveries that lead to the advancement of certain medical treatments, such as those for cancer and heart disease.

## DALLAS SCHOOLS HONORED AT THE TEXAS CAPITOL

**The South Oak Cliff High School Boys' Basketball Team** was honored with a congratulatory resolution for winning the **2006 4A State Championship Title.** **The Franklin D. Roosevelt High School Boys' Basketball Team** was honored with a congratulatory resolution for winning the **2006 3A State Championship Title.**

**Giddings and the Dallas Delegation** also honored the Dallas Independent School District's School for the **Talented and Gifted at Yvonne A. Ewell Townview Center** for its selection by **Newsweek Magazine** as the nation's top public high school in 2006, and congratulated **DISD's School of Science and Engineering at Yvonne A. Ewell Townview Center** on its ranking as 8th among the nation's top schools.



*Giddings reads House Resolution 416 on the floor of the Texas House of Representatives.*

## LANCASTER GIRLS' TRACK & FIELD TEAM BREAKS RECORD

**Giddings** congratulates Coach Beverly Humphrey and the girls on their outstanding accomplishment. The team **broke a record by winning the team championship during the 2006 Texas University Interscholastic League (UIL) 4A competition for the sixth consecutive year.**

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CITY OF DESOTO AND THE CITY OF LANCASTER

**The City of DeSoto** earned the highly prestigious **All-America City Award**, and the City of Lancaster was a finalist in the competition. **Giddings** congratulates both cities on their outstanding achievements.

## WINNER OF THE 2006 HELEN GIDDINGS SCHOLARSHIP CHOSEN

**Ms. Deonna McGary, a 2006 graduate of DeSoto High School, received the Helen Giddings Concerned Citizens of DeSoto Scholarship on June 16, 2006 at the annual Concerned DeSoto Citizens Scholarship and Awards Ceremony.** Ms. McGary has contributed greatly to the improvement of the community through many organizations and plans to attend Jackson State University in the fall, majoring in education. **Giddings honored this extraordinary student with a special resolution at the ceremony.**

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR INPUT AND RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE!

Over 700 people responded to the questionnaire from the 79th Regular Session Newsletter regarding public school finance and other issues. These responses provided needed input which was very important in the decision-making process for choices that directly impact our everyday lives. Furthermore, the outpouring of letters and phone calls during this past special session helped **Giddings** to know and understand the feelings of District 109 residents. Please continue to speak up!

## 80TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION AGENDA

In the upcoming 80th Regular Session in January, **Giddings** plans to continue working to improve the **Texas Workers' Compensation System**, strengthen laws concerning **Identity Theft**, ensure each child receives a quality education, and improve funding and accessibility to higher education, as well as many other important issues. **The Committee on Business and Industry, which Giddings chairs,** will spend the interim studying the implementation of H.B. 7 and the new workers' compensation system, the growing problem of **Identity Theft**, and the powers of **Homeowners' Associations.**

## 79TH LEGISLATURE, 3RD CALLED SESSION, HIGHLIGHTS

H.B. 1: Enacts public school reforms, including a teacher pay raise, uniform school start dates, incentive programs, and school board elections.

H.B. 2: Allocates all new revenue from franchise taxes, motor vehicle sales and use taxes, and taxes on cigarettes and other tobacco products to property tax relief.

H.B. 3: Updates the business and franchise taxes to close loopholes and ensure that all businesses pay their fair share.

H.B. 4: Requires tax assessors to compute the standard presumptive value of a motor vehicle and to collect any tax due from the sale of that vehicle if the amount is equal or greater than 80 percent of its standard presumptive value. It further requires a certified appraisal of the retail value of any motor vehicle sold by a registered dealer.

H.B. 5: Increases the tax on cigarettes by \$1.00.

## HOW TO CONTACT HELEN GIDDINGS

### CAPITOL OFFICE

P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, Texas 78768-2910  
(512) 463-0953 phone  
(512) 463-5887 fax

### DISTRICT OFFICE

1510 North Hampton Road, Suite 220  
DeSoto, Texas 75115  
(972) 224-6795 phone  
(972) 228-6796 fax