Governor Rick Perry received a standing ovation before and after addressing the 10th Session of the Texas Silver-Haired Legislature on September 14 in the House of Representatives chamber in the State Capitol. The Governor recalled the six years he spent as a member of the House of Representatives working to improve the lives of all Texans during the 1980s when the TSHL was first getting started.

Although Texas has changed greatly since then, he said, “One thing has remained consistent and that is the commitment of the TSHL to advocate for the best interests of Texas seniors.”

“Every two years,” the Governor continued, “your work has a powerful impact on the legislative process, allowing Texas to draw upon the wisdom and experience of the greatest generation as we formulate public policy. State leaders know that the recommendations you put forward each legislative session are developed with careful consideration, straightforward motives and after ample debate. That’s why I have been proud to sign into law many of this organization’s top priorities including home-owner’s insurance reform, measures to crack down on identity theft and other scams, and medical malpractice reform to help ensure that Texans have greater access to affordable healthcare.”

“Last session, Texas took another important step for seniors by allowing cities, counties and junior college districts to freeze property taxes for senior citizens and Texans with disabilities. It is wrong for seniors to be priced out of homes by runaway property taxes. Schools and other priorities can be funded without asking Texans to pay ten percent more a year in property taxes. Property taxes must not only be cut but also controlled.”

In conclusion, Governor Perry said that he looks forward to working with the Texas Silver-Haired Legislature during the next State Legislative Session to lower property taxes and make sure that the goal of home ownership remains within the reach of all generations.
TOP-10 PRIORITY RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY TSHL 10TH SESSION

The TSHL passed a total of 43 DR resolutions during the 10th Legislative Session. The following chart summarizes the top-ten priority DR resolutions, identified by number, title and resolve statement requesting specific action of the 79th Texas Legislature. Monday, November 8, 2004 is the pre-filing deadline for the 79th Texas Legislature. TSHL Members, please keep Ann Pennington, Vice chair, LAC, informed of any action you take regarding your resolution(s) in finding sponsors, interested legislators or interested groups. Ann's email is apennington2@austin.rr.com. Her phone number is 512-282-7708.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DR#</th>
<th>Title and Resolve Statement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DR7</td>
<td>Personal Needs Allowance. That the 79th Texas Legislature reinstate the personal needs allowance of $60.00 (Sixty dollars) and be a budget priority in the 79th Legislative Session.</td>
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<td>DR18</td>
<td>Geriatric Training for Medical Professionals. That the 79th Texas Legislature enact a requirement for geriatric training in all medical schools receiving Federal and State funding.</td>
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<td>DR14</td>
<td>Property Evaluations by Appraisal Districts. That the 79th Texas Legislature enact Legislation to restrict the 10% allowable of appraisal value be reduced to a 3% cap thus allowing revenue beyond the 3% cap to have approval of local voters and an oversight appraisal board of 5 elected officials to be accountable to taxpayers as approved by local voters.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DR43</td>
<td>Bed Tax on Nursing Facility Residents. That the 79th Texas Legislature oppose a bed tax on nursing facilities residents in Texas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DR31</td>
<td>Expand Area Agencies on Aging Access System. That the 79th Texas Legislature amend HB 2292 , 78th Legislature, to expand the infrastructure of the existing 28 Area Agencies on Aging to be inclusive of persons with disabilities and identify the 28 Area Agencies on Aging of Texas as the access and assistance entry point for long-term care services within the Department of Aging and Disability Services.</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>DR24</td>
<td>Registration of Assisted Living Facilities in Texas. That the 79th Texas Legislature require all Assisted Living facilities in operation in the State of Texas that accept monetary compensation for food, shelter and assistance with personal care needs for under four (4) residents unrelated to the proprietor be required to self-identify as such by registering every two (2) years with the State of Texas for a fee of fifty ($50.00) dollars and be subject to inspection and monitoring by the State to protect the rights and safety of the residents. The department or any duly appointed board or committee may establish by rule the administration of the above process and is to be effective upon becoming law.</td>
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<td>DR15</td>
<td>Permit Seniors on Medicare to buy 3 Prescriptions per month at Medicaid prices. That the 79th Texas Legislature enact legislation to permit the seniors on Medicare, without drug coverage, be able to buy three prescriptions per month at the same prices that the state pays for prescriptions on their Medicaid program.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR35</td>
<td>Maintain Identity of the State Unit on Aging. That the 79th Texas Legislature maintain the identity of the state unit on aging as the viable and visible state advocate for older Texans and preserve the functions within the state unit which have been of vital interest to Texas Legislatures since 1957.</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>DR2</td>
<td>Penalties for Abusing or Neglecting the Elderly. That the 79th Texas Legislature again attempt similar legislation (passed in the 78th Legislature), address abuse and neglect penalties in a separate bill which applies only to the elderly, in order to more likely avoid a veto of the bill for flawed language.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR9</td>
<td>Reform Homeowners Insurance. That the 79th Texas Legislature enact legislation to strengthen statutory penalties for insurance companies that overcharge their policyholders; require periodic review of insurance rate to determine if they are unjustified or excessive and if rate reductions are in order; pass an industry-wide cap limiting the effect of credit scoring on homeowners and personal automobile insurance rates at no more than 10%; enact legislation that would prevent stigmatization of real property and individuals when an insurance claim is filed; require disclosure in layman's terms of actual coverage being offered; prohibit carriers from inserting &quot;right-of-rescission&quot; clauses except for non-payment of premiums.</td>
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Chris Kyker...in the Speaker's Corner

The 10th TSHL Legislative Session convened in the House of Representatives Chambers at the State Capitol on Monday, September 13, 2004, with opening ceremonies and high expectations. When we adjourned sine die on Friday, September 17, we left the Capitol with a great spirit of accomplishment and a chart of direction for the 79th Texas Legislature regarding older Texans.

We passed 43 resolutions with a direct impact on seniors and 26 with an indirect or supportive impact, a total of 69 resolutions. That was an all-time record and a tribute to the vigorous debate in committees and on the floor.

The 10th TSHL's number one priority would restore the personal needs allowance for Medicaid nursing home patients to $60 from $45 per month. The reduction occurred during the 78th Texas Legislative session to help offset the nearly $10 billion short fall in projected state revenues. During the 79th Session, TSHL will request that the $60 allowance be restored.

The 10th Session set a number of firsts. According to Honorable Estella Trevino of the Lower Rio Grande, Governor Rick Perry is the first Governor to address the Texas Silver-Haired Legislature in the House Chambers in its nearly 20-year history. Estella should know. She has attended all TSHL Legislative Sessions since her election in 1986. Governor Perry addressed the group on Tuesday and outlined his priorities for seniors. Tom Craddick, House Speaker, welcomed us. Comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn was a featured speaker on Thursday. Representative Dan Flynn spoke on Friday. He recognized the work of TSHL and especially that of Deputy Speaker Pro Tem Charlotte Parks from his district in East Texas.

The freshmen class was phenomenal — another record of 36 new members. They came prepared, committed and ready to work. There was unusual turnover in the leadership of committees and the freshmen led the way. Committee officers included new members John Leslie, Dub Hoffmann, David Leopard, Adalaide Cash Balaban, Jim Brisbin, Maxine Golightly, Jackie Walker, Jane Lanier, Fannie Spain, Ann Pennington, Chester Cunningham, Betty Streekfuss, Libby Cleveland and Patsy Jo Hancock.

Other firsts included press releases written each day by Harold Evetts, Chair of the Communications Committee. We also discovered that the Session was covered by closed circuit television and seen in the offices of Texas Legislators. Even the pictures were different with our official 10th TSHL photo made in the House Chambers.

With special thanks to Representative Peggy Hamric, Chair of House Administration, we enjoyed excellent arrangements in the House chambers and committee rooms. We especially appreciated the TSHL headquarters room in the House Lounge, another first for TSHL.

The Operations and the Legislative Action Committees continued their nightly vigil to prepare resolutions for consideration on the floor the next day. Working past midnight into early morning hours was the norm for these hard working groups.

The Session demanded the best of all us and we delivered. Now the work is just beginning. The 79th Texas Legislature convenes January 11, 2005. TSHL will be there -- prepared, committed and ready.

Continued from Page 1

SPECIAL RESOLUTION
PASSES IN 10TH SESSION

statewide for the independent school districts in 1987.

Many cities, counties, and community college taxing entities throughout the state readily conceded to the mandate of the voters of their districts and voluntarily froze the taxes as a result of the passage of Proposition 13. Many taxing entities were presented with petitions for a referendum on the tax freeze; most referendums won by almost as large a margin as did Proposition 13 in the November election. Many taxing entities have yet to implement Proposition 13 by either a vote of the governing body or by a petition and referendum of the voters.

In view of the overwhelming voter approval of Proposition 13 in the statewide election and the less than overwhelming implementation of Proposition 13 by the elected officials of local taxing entities, the TSHL Special Resolution petitions the State Legislature to implement the freeze statewide as it has previously done for the independent school districts.

The unique status of this Special Resolution and what makes it distinct from all other resolutions in the 20-year history of the Texas Silver-Haired Legislature comes from the statewide endorsement of Proposition 13 by the voters.

With Governor Perry voicing his support for lower property taxes for seniors in his address at the 10th Session – the first ever appearance by a Governor to the TSHL in chamber - the TSHL voted on the final day of the Session to support the statewide freeze as a Special Resolution authored by Albert B. Campbell, secretary of the TSHL and member of the Retirement and Aging Committee. For further information, Campbell can be reached at 979-279-5420.

— Report by Albert B. Campbell

APPLAUSE

Nancy Foster, TSHL Frisco, Texas, has been appointed to the "SMU Political Forum" at the John Tower Center for Political Studies, Southern Methodist University in Dallas. She is also a long-time member of the Dallas Hall Society at SMU. The newly formed Forum members have automatic membership in the Rotunda Society at Dedman College, SMU.
TO MARKET! TO MARKET!
by Carlos Higgins, Speaker Pro Tem

The Honorable Oralia Cantu from Coastal Bend has already started working on a marketing plan for one of our Resolutions. She gathered and sent to me many signatures on a petition she initiated. It says we favor Casinos in Texas so we can keep that Texas money in Texas. When any of us try to make the case for passing this idea into law, this petition will be a big plus. It shows there are real people out there who do support this legislation and who vote.

Successful organizations and individuals develop plans and goals, develop good strategies, and then aggressively pursue those goals. The Resolutions we just adopted express our specific goals. Now we need to market ‘em. What are our strategies? First, to publicize and explain them, especially to Texas legislators.

We need to identify sponsors in the Legislature who’ll convert our Resolutions into Bills and file them. Every one of us in the TSHL should do this. Right now, we can pay attention to what candidates for the Legislature are saying, and build on the positions they take. For example, my Representative is taking a strong, public position against converting existing highways to toll roads. Fine! He should be a natural for sponsoring our Resolution against that very thing.

Whenever you get a fairly firm sponsor for a Resolution, please let our Legislative Action Committee officers know the details. And if our efforts across the state result in multiple sponsors for the same Resolutions, so much the better.

For each Resolution, step one is to get it filed as a Bill. Then, we need to follow it through the process to generate support. It’s not too early right now to start gathering support. Oralia’s efforts for Casinos in Texas is a good example we all ought to follow.

We are members of a well-respected organization — the TSHL - with an enviable record in the legislative arena. In our attempts this year to address issues affecting seniors in Texas, we have adopted laudable goals. But that’s just a good start. Now, we need to get on with the spade work if we are to carry on the well-established tradition of the TSHL. That is, to be able to look back next summer at a long list of solid legislative accomplishments for our constituents.

Just do it! And remember — everybody’s efforts count!

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