

STATE OF TEXAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



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February 10, 2010

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Mr. John S. O'Brien, Deputy Director
Legislative Budget Board
P.O. Box 12666
Austin, TX 78711-2666

Dear Mr. O'Brien:

In an effort to protect our state's economic future during a national recession, our state leaders have requested that all state agencies review their expenditures and submit plans to reduce their budgets by 5 percent. While tough times require tough decisions, I am concerned about potential cuts to state employees' and retiree's health benefits.

I respectfully request that the Legislative Budget Board exempt state employees' & retirees' health benefits from the 5 percent reductions. This reduction in the Employee Retirement System health plan would amount to about \$105 million and would affect thousands of Texas families. In this economy, we cannot afford to place additional burdens on families that are struggling to get by.

Furthermore, my understanding is that the Employees Retirement System (ERS) Board will decide this May whether to reduce benefits in order to cover the projected deficit if additional funds are not provided by the Legislative Budget Board. I would like to see the funds released to the ERS to cover the projected deficit in the state employee/retiree health plan for the next year. Covering these health benefits for our retirees, who served our state for many years, could at least free up that portion of their income for other necessary purchases and help stimulate the local Texas economy.

Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Allen Vaught".

Allen R. Vaught

cc: The Honorable David Dewhurst, Joint-Chair
The Honorable Joe Straus, Joint-Chair
The Honorable Steve Ogden
The Honorable Jim Pitts
The Honorable Robert Duncan
The Honorable Rene Oliveira
The Honorable Juan Hinojosa
The Honorable Dan Branch
The Honorable Judith Zaffirini
The Honorable Sylvester Turner

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