

features

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The 2011 Texas Legislature (so far)

On February 8, 2011, the Governor laid out "the state of the state." In the speech, he reiterated his belief that the economy in Texas is strong and that Texas is the envy of the nation. He spoke of the emergency legislation that he has requested and acknowledged that the budget shortfall for the next two years will require some belt tightening. He included brief descriptions of some budget reductions that he would recommend including suspending funding for some state agencies and consolidating others. The budget shortfall for the next two years is currently estimated to be at least 27 billion dollars. The Governor's specific budget recommendations can be found at the following link:

<http://governor.state.tx.us/files/press-office/Governor-Budget-2012-13.pdf>

The Senate Finance Committee has held several hearings to address health and human services budget needs as well as education. In the meantime, school districts are making plans to lay off staff, use furloughs, cut back programs, and take other measures to address the reduced state funding that will result from the current budget crisis. These efforts were not mentioned in the Governor's state of the state speech. He did say, however, that the "Rainy Day Fund," the state's reserve funds used for emergencies, was best left

untouched. The funds, the Governor said, should not be used for recurring expenses.

The House Appropriations Sub-Committee on Public Education will soon take up the recommended funding levels for Article III of the Appropriations Act for the 2012-2013 biennium. More information about those hearings will be included in "Features."

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