



## 2008 Questionnaire

Empower Texans PAC will make endorsements during the 2008 election cycle, in both the primary and general elections. We will not necessarily endorse a candidate in every race.

In order to be considered for endorsement, a candidate must complete this questionnaire. Only candidates who have completed, signed and returned the questionnaire by **Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2008**, will be considered for endorsement in the March primaries.

Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Sought: \_\_\_\_\_

### **REFORMING THE BUDGET**

1. To control government spending at the state and local level, Texas should institute a spending limit equal to either the sum of inflation-plus-population-growth or the increase in the gross state product.

Support: \_\_\_\_\_ Oppose: \_\_\_\_\_

The spending limit may only be exceeded at the state level by a 3/4<sup>th</sup> super-majority, recorded vote of both bodies, the signature of the governor, and a fiscal impact statement clearly outlining why the increase is necessary

Support: \_\_\_\_\_ Oppose: \_\_\_\_\_

The spending limit may only be exceeded at the local level through a majority vote in an election held on one of the state-mandated uniform election dates.

Support: \_\_\_\_\_ Oppose: \_\_\_\_\_

2. All state agencies should begin their budgets from a “zero” base rather than additional growth over the previous year. Additionally, every expenditure must include a clear taxpayer impact statement that includes the intended outcomes expected to be attained; and when those goals are not met, then the legislature must eliminate those expenditures.

Support: \_\_\_\_\_ Oppose: \_\_\_\_\_

3. An independent commission should be established to identify and eliminate waste, fraud and abuse in government spending. Both the House and Senate must give each proposal a recorded vote, without amendment, within the first 30 days of the legislative session.

Support: \_\_\_\_\_ Oppose: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Texas' economy has produced surpluses in all but one of the last 10 biennia, with those funds used almost exclusively to grow government rather than for immediate tax relief. A constitutional amendment should be adopted that requires surplus revenues to be used for tax relief, after ensuring a full, constitutionally-dedicated, Rainy Day fund.

Support: \_\_\_\_\_ Oppose: \_\_\_\_\_

5. The state's Rainy Day fund has been used to grow the size of government by creating new programs and expanding old ones. A constitutional amendment is needed to restrict use of money deposited in the current Rainy Fund only to balancing the budget in times of revenue shortfall.

Support: \_\_\_\_\_ Oppose: \_\_\_\_\_

6. While governors in Texas have long had the "line-item" veto as a way to control pork spending, the Legislature has developed a process to circumvent this important "check" on spending. The budget should be presented in a way that ensures future governors can fully exercise the line-item veto.

Support: \_\_\_\_\_ Oppose: \_\_\_\_\_

7. The 2008-09 budget includes many earmarks, such as a \$50,000 subsidy for a particular Texas wine vineyard and hundreds of thousands of dollars for projects like a city park in Houston and a zoo in Brownsville. While government should provide a healthy business environment through low taxes and deregulation, it is not the role of state government to subsidize private business and selectively fund purely local projects. Accordingly, these kinds of earmarks should be eliminated from future budgets.

Support: \_\_\_\_\_ Oppose: \_\_\_\_\_

## **TAXES IN TEXAS**

1. Will you oppose any and all efforts to increase the overall tax burden in Texas?

YES: \_\_\_\_\_ NO: \_\_\_\_\_

2. The method by which property taxes are calculated and levied should be reformed, including (a) limitations on the revenue growth generated from any single piece of property year-over-year, (b) making members of the appraisal review boards answerable to the public rather than the taxing entities which appoint them, and (c) creating a uniform statewide standard for property tax appraisal.

Support: \_\_\_\_\_ Oppose: \_\_\_\_\_

3. The “gross margins tax” on Texas business, which has been labeled a business income tax by the Federal Accounting Standards Board, should be eliminated.

Support: \_\_\_\_\_ Oppose: \_\_\_\_\_

4. End-user consumption taxes have been demonstrated to be the least economically harmful and most transparent way to generate government revenue. Tax incidence analysis by the Office of the Comptroller and others has conclusively demonstrated that consumption taxes are also fair. Texas should phase out property taxes in favor of end-user consumption taxes.

Support: \_\_\_\_\_ Oppose: \_\_\_\_\_

5. If Congress were to send to the states a balanced budget constitutional amendment requiring a three-fifths vote in both houses of Congress to raise taxes, would you support it?

Support: \_\_\_\_\_ Oppose: \_\_\_\_\_

### **GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY**

1. The Texas Legislature has mandated that all state expenditures, contracts and grants be made available in a single online database. This provides taxpayers with the ability to hold their elected officials accountable. In the next legislative session, the law should be expanded to include all counties, cities and schools.

Support: \_\_\_\_\_ Oppose: \_\_\_\_\_

2. While the current transparency database includes all contracts awarded, it does not provide taxpayers with the ability to compare the contract with the other qualified bids. In many cases, the low bid does not win the contract for a variety of reasons. In the next legislative session, the qualified bids that were not selected should be made available for review in the same database.

Support: \_\_\_\_\_ Oppose: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Some specific state taxes and fees are diverted from their intended purpose. A levy should either used for its intended purpose or reduced or abolished to the extent it is no longer needed.

Support: \_\_\_\_\_ Oppose: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Unfunded mandates should be prohibited. If a local government body believes the Legislature has imposed upon them an unfunded mandate, they should be able to appeal to the offices of the Attorney General and Comptroller, which in turn would investigate the claim and would have the authority to suspend regulation pending further action or clarification by the Legislature.

Support: \_\_\_\_\_ Oppose: \_\_\_\_\_

**GOVERNMENT REGULATION**

1. Before the Legislature adopts a statute or an agency adopts a rule that regulates economic activity, the Legislative Budget Board in the case of a statute, or the agency or the Comptroller in the case of a rule, shall be required to estimate and publish the projected cost of complying with that regulation that will be incurred by businesses and individuals, including costs to consumers in higher prices for products and services.

Support: \_\_\_\_\_ Oppose: \_\_\_\_\_

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*This questionnaire must be signed by the candidate.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Candidate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Please mail or fax all four pages of the questionnaire to us so that it arrives no later than Wednesday, January 16, 2008.**

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