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OPEN LETTER

Honorable Oliverson and Slawson,

These are exciting times for conservatives in Texas. So many aspirations are tied to your bold step to become the next Speaker in the Texas House of Representatives. I will implore you to give consideration to reform of the structure of House Committee hearings.

Currently these committee hearings seem to have servile deference to the lobbyists and those who the Committee Chairman deem as invited experts to give testimony. It would be a tremendous boost if you, in your campaign for Speaker, address an apparent inverted loyalty.

Paid lobbyists work the legislators 24 hours 7 days a week and even more so when the legislature is in session. Most lobbyists live in Austin and are funded to provide large meet and greets to legislators and their staffs. Beguiling them with meals and libations aplenty. Many of those invited to give testimony, while paid by their institutions, are also compensated by the State of Texas for their travel expenses.

Grassroots citizen activists have none of this at their disposal. These Texans are left to self-fund any of the travel costs required to make their pleas to the legislature.

While lobbyists living in Austin can get to the capitol in a matter of minutes, grassroots travel for hours to give their testimony.

While lobbyists are given front row seats and 5 minutes to talk with questions readied to give them more time to elaborate on their positions, grassroots are relegated to the wee hours and allotted a "generous" 2 minutes and a dismissive thank you for coming.

While lobbyists wile the hours away being paid for every minute, voters must sit idly by giving up their time, foregoing vacation days or simply missing work hours to then have to comply with a restricted time slot to present the impact on everyday lives of the legislation under consideration.

This is a simple plea that this backwardation of testimony time be restructured. That public testimony be given the opportune time slots. Lobbyists living in Austin can follow proceedings virtually. If they must, they can leave the comfort of their living room at 11 PM or so and be at the committee hearings within minutes. Currently your constituents arrive at 8AM to possibly not be granted speaking opportunities until 2 or 3 the next morning.

The taxpayers, the voters, the citizens that will be forced to comply and pay for the laws being enacted are relegated to speaking sometimes to a skeleton committee of legislators. Legislators that may have excused themselves to be at an event hosted by the very lobbyists that testified earlier and work against the best interests of Texas taxpayers.

With all due respect to the time our legislators dedicate to their elected positions, will you truly consider investigating the committee hearing process that elevates the structure of the citizens voluntarily participating in the adoption of legislation as opposed to those whose participation in the process is for sale to draw a salary.

Someone Should Lobby for the Texas Taxpayer

Mark V Goloby

President

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