

***On Saturday, January, 8th, 2011, Senator Dan Patrick, who has formed the Tea Party Caucus in the legislature, sent the following open letter to the media, all members, and conservative groups across the state.***

### **The Case for a Caucus Vote- The People Have Earned it**

Conservative voters across Texas are responsible for the Republican majority in the legislature. They want that majority to select the next Speaker. A Caucus vote will send a strong message that in Texas the Republican Party puts people before politics as usual. It will set an example for others to follow across our great nation.

Let me be clear. I have not suggested to any member who they should support for Speaker. That is their decision as is the decision to vote in the Caucus. However, as a Republican member of the Senate I have a stake in their decision, as do all Republicans. Everyone should understand that this race has transcended the normal contest for Speaker. As a Republican concerned about his party, I'm troubled that if the voice of the people is ignored, a split may occur in our party that could take years to heal.

We have just witnessed the greatest political uprising of our lifetime. The Tea Party movement, grassroots Republicans, and conservative independents are going to gain in strength over the next few years, not weaken. They have tasted victory. They know that they, not just the establishment, can determine the outcome of elections. Voters are more informed, more aware, more passionate, and more connected than ever. They are fed up with government as usual and fought against the very insider politics that many see in the current race for Speaker.

Conservative voters block walked, poll watched, raised money, ran phone banks, and did everything they could to get conservative Republicans elected. They believed their efforts were appreciated and valued by those they helped elect. Without a Caucus vote, conservative voters will be angry, disappointed, and disillusioned. But, they will also fight back. It seems to this Senator they have earned the right to have their voice heard in all we do in Austin. It would also be wise for legislators to avoid that fight.

President Abraham Lincoln, who had to make many tough choices, once said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." Virtually every Republican group, Tea Party group, thousands of voters, precinct chairs, entire County parties, and every pro-life group but one, is calling for a Caucus vote for a conservative Speaker. These voices represent potentially millions of voters.

A caucus vote is simply the right thing to do. People always stand behind those who do the right thing. I respect that this has become a difficult issue for some in the legislature. It will not be the last difficult issue Republicans face in either the House or Senate this session. In his first inaugural address, Lincoln urged that we listen to our "better angels." That is wise council for all of us as we approach the 82<sup>nd</sup> legislative session.

Senator Dan Patrick

My comments are mine and do not reflect the views of any caucus, group, or any other legislator.