

LONE STAR PROJECT

FAILED LEADER SERIES

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Dewhurst to Betray Colleagues and Suppress Voters

"Lite" Governor poised to take advantage of ailing Senator and move discriminatory voter suppression legislation

Throughout his tenure, David Dewhurst has been cynically amiable and typically ineffective. As a result, Texas suffers. This same weak pliability, however, has been useful to national partisan Republicans when they need a spongy backbone to bend to their efforts to suppress minority voters and advance their partisan political agenda, as was evidenced when Dewhurst flip-flopped and broke his word on re-redistricting in 2003.



The Karl Rove-driven strategy to use voter suppression bills and phony voter fraud investigations as props to hold down the growing influence of Democratic leaning voters is now playing out in Texas. House Bill 218 would force registered voters who have a valid voter registration card and appear on the voter roll to present additional identification before voting. The bill is opposed by nonpartisan groups like the AARP and League of Women Voters for, "disproportionately affect[ing] minorities, the elderly, rural residents and women." (*Source: Associated Press, April 23, 2007*) To pass this type of controversial and divisive legislation requires a rare combination of a weak and mean spirited legislative leader. It appears that David Dewhurst may be just the man in Texas for this cowardly and deceitful bit of dirty work

David Dewhurst – El Aprovechado Cobarde (*The Cowardly Bully*)

Under normal circumstances, Dewhurst would not have the votes to pass the pending voter suppression bill. All eleven Texas Democratic State Senators, ten of whom represent minority districts, oppose the voter suppression bill. (*Source: Houston Chronicle, May 2, 2007*) Under the Texas Senate's traditional two-thirds rule, these eleven votes are enough to block consideration of the bill. Dewhurst, however, is actively considering three options that expose his dishonest intentions:

- **Spring the vote at a time when Senator Mario Gallegos, who is still recovering**

- **from a life-threatening liver transplant, can not be present to vote against the measure** – Senator Mario Gallegos is the 11th vote needed to block the voter suppression bill. Senator Gallegos has clearly expressed his intention to oppose the measure and asked Dewhurst to inform him when the vote will occur. *(Source: Houston Chronicle, May 2, 2007)* Republicans can enact the legislation only if they betray Senator Gallegos by bringing up the bill at a time when he is unable to be present in the Senate Chambers.



- **Defy years of precedent and change the traditional two-thirds rule that prevents a majority party from passing radical laws** – In order to keep an irresponsible majority in check, encourage compromise and prevent overtly partisan and highly controversial legislation from reaching the Senate floor, the Texas Senate operates under the two-thirds rule. The rule requires that at least two-thirds of all Senators present and voting must agree to debate a bill **before** it is brought to the floor. This means that eleven Senators can unite to block harmful and highly divisive bills. *(The Houston Chronicle, March 24, 2004)*
- **Improperly attach the voter suppression bill as an amendment to unrelated, less controversial legislation** - Dewhurst or his designee might ignore Senate rules of germaneness and allow the voter suppression bill to be considered as an amendment to wholly unrelated legislation.

No Evidence to Justify Discriminatory Voter Suppression Bill

There is literally **NO** evidence indicating that illegal immigrants are voting in significant numbers or have had an effect on any election.

- A widely reported New York Times investigation showed that after 5 years of aggressive prosecutions, the Bush Department of Justice could point to, "virtually no evidence of any organized effort to skew federal elections." *(Source: New York Times, April 12, 2007)*
- Political appointees were forced to doctor a report after nonpartisan investigation revealed, "there is widespread but not unanimous agreement that there is little polling place fraud." *(Source: The Houston Chronicle, April 17, 2007)*
- Even fiercely partisan Republican Attorney General Abbott has admitted that after spending millions of Texas and federal taxpayer dollars investigating, "there have been few [voter fraud] prosecutions in Texas." *(Source: Austin American-Statesman, April 26, 2007)*
- After State Representative Hubert Vo's close win against Republican incumbent Talmadge Heflin in 2004, Republicans quickly charged voter fraud and attempted to have the results reversed. As part of an official election contest, exhaustive evidence was presented at public hearings conducted by a Texas House committee headed by a Republican. NO evidence of the widespread voter fraud was found and Republican Heflin's allegations were dismissed. *(Source: Fort Worth Star-Telegram, February 9, 2005)*

Voter Suppression & Phony Voter Fraud Charges are Part of National GOP Agenda

The rapid growth of the voting age Hispanic population coupled with strength of Democratic candidates among elderly, middle class and working families serves as a serious long-term threat to GOP political power in Texas and nationwide. To combat the

growing Democratic base, the Bush administration and Karl Rove have worked to suppress turnout among new voters.

- The Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported, "Facing nationwide voter registration drives by Democratic-leaning groups, the [Bush] administration alleged widespread election fraud and endorsed proposals for tougher state and federal voter identification laws. Presidential political adviser Karl Rove alluded to the strategy in April 2006 when he railed about voter fraud in a speech to the Republican National Lawyers Association." (Source: *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, April 19, 2007)
- It is also clear that both President Bush and Karl Rove were intimately involved in the scheme to replace US District Attorneys who were unwilling to prosecute voter fraud. One attorney was pressured after, "GOP complaints -- passed from Rove and Bush to Gonzales last fall -- that he was not aggressive in prosecuting voter fraud." (Source: *The Washington Post*, April 19, 2007)

Dewhurst - "Lite" on Integrity

Under the leadership of David Dewhurst and other Statewide Republican officeholders, Texas ranks at or near the bottom on important quality of life issues such as investment in public schools, graduation rates, child healthcare and fair utility rates. (Source: *Texas on the Brink*, January 2007) Rather than stand up to tougher Republican politicians like Tom DeLay, Tom Craddick and even Karl Rove, time and again, "Lite" Governor Dewhurst folds under partisan pressure to do the Republicans bidding and defy the real priorities of most Texans.



Dewhurst's duplicity and weakness was first confirmed in 2003 when he collapsed to partisan pressure from Tom DeLay and Karl Rove. Dewhurst broke his word to Senate colleagues and forced through an unwanted, discriminatory and ultimately illegal congressional redistricting bill. Dewhurst lied to legislators and to the press that he would not break the two-thirds rule. Early in the year, Dewhurst

said, "The Senate won't take up the idea, he [Dewhurst] said, unless it comes over from the House in a form that will attract both a two-thirds vote in the Senate and the support of Hispanic interest groups." (Source: *Dallas Morning News*, January 30, 2003)

Dewhurst double-crossed his colleagues by attempting to lock them in the Senate Chamber to force a redistricting vote. Later, he engaged in petty retribution schemes such as suspending Senate parking privileges and levying unenforceable fines.

In the end, Dewhurst ignored his responsibility to protect Texas voters and allowed himself to be used as a partisan stooge by simply doing Tom DeLay's bidding.



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