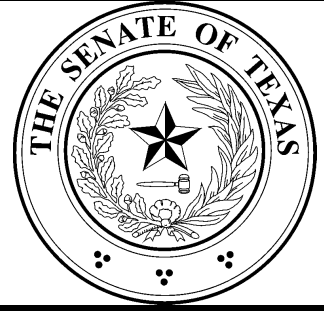


SENATOR
JOHN WHITMIRE
DISTRICT 15
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Whitmire expresses outrage at recent University of Houston Tuition Increase

AUSTIN, Texas -- Today, Senator John Whitmire (D-Houston) expressed his strong disapproval of the University of Houston Board of Regents vote to increase tuition by nearly 6 percent.

"With gas prices at historical levels, I find it insensitive that the Regents would vote to increase tuition at a mostly commuter school," said Senator Whitmire. "And while it is too late to reconsider the vote to increase tuition, this is one UH graduate and member of the Texas Senate who thinks the decision is ill-advised. I would have urged them to wait until January and appeal to the Texas Legislature for funding rather than increasing tuition at this time."

Senator Whitmire was vehemently opposed to tuition deregulation when it passed the Legislature in 2003. "It was one of the worst bills we have passed in my 35 years as a Legislator," commented Whitmire. "Had the 4-year sunset provision I successfully added in the Senate been in the final bill, I guarantee you the Legislature would have reconsidered the terrible decision to deregulate tuition this past session."

"I applaud Texas Tech for their recent decision to hold the line and freeze tuition at their schools," Whitmire stated. "As a UH graduate and distinguished alumnus, I am terribly disappointed in my alma mater."

"I wholeheartedly support UH and their efforts to reach Tier 1 status, but not on the backs of students many of who come from working class families and are often not as fortunate as some of the students who attend UT and A&M," said Whitmire.

"I agree with our universities and colleges that the Legislature has not properly funded higher education," said Whitmire. "However, the funding shortfalls should be made an issue before the Legislature and the public and not on the backs of our already financially-strapped students. We must all work together to get college tuition back under control."

"With reports of a large budget surplus next legislative session, I would urge the Republican Leadership to back off talks of tax rebates and instead focus our resources on much needed and woefully underfunded programs such as higher education, highways and bridges, public education, criminal justice, and health care," stated Whitmire.

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