

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



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LON BURNAM
DISTRICT 90 • FORT WORTH

May 15, 2008

The Honorable Larry Phillips
Chairman, House Committee on General Investigating and Ethics
Room E2.1016
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768

Dear Chairman Phillips,

Thank you for the opportunity to visit with you by phone on Tuesday. I look forward to meeting with you next Wednesday.

I would like you to know that I was offended to learn from the Quorum Report that the House General Investigating Committee has launched an investigation into each and every member of the Texas House of Representatives. I can assure you that many fellow members share my anger. No member of this body, regardless of political affiliation, should have to learn that he or she is under investigation by your Committee by way of the press.

Speaker Craddick has once again abused the levers of government by using non-partisan, non-political governmental entities to research, create and leak a politically motivated story. The story curiously targeted only three members of the Texas House, all of whom are out-spoken foes of the Speaker. He has now mobilized precious state resources in a thinly veiled attempt to intimidate opposition to his Speakership.

Since, according to multiple statements from the Speaker's office, I, along with "every member" of the Texas House of Representatives, am under investigation by your committee, I would like assurance that the investigation will be full and impartial. To that end, I respectfully request that the House Committee on General Investigating and Ethics include, in its investigation into hiring practices in the Texas House, all current and former employees of Speaker Craddick.

On May 2, 2008, Speaker Craddick was quoted in the Austin American Statesman saying, "*If some legislators are paying employees with taxpayer dollars who are*

performing little or no work, that is an egregious misuse of state money. It must be stopped immediately and with full restitution made." I hope you will hold Speaker Craddick, his employees, his Chairpersons, and his allies to the same standard.

As you know, the House Parliamentarian, Terry Keel, is a "permanent full-time" employee of the Texas House earning nearly \$140,000 a year. If Speaker Craddick is going to use taxpayer dollars to investigate three of his foes for employees earning a few hundred dollars a month, the importance of ensuring taxpayers that a \$140,000 a year employee -- a substantially higher cost to the state -- is actually dedicating 40-hours per week to the Texas House over and above his own criminal defense law firm cannot be overstated.

Additionally, I would greatly appreciate assurance that whatever system Speaker Craddick currently uses to track work time of his employees, including those with outside employment and those running for elected office, will be included in your investigation.

I would also like to request that your committee include in its investigation possible violations of Section 4.16(c), *Housekeeping Resolution* (H.R. 2, 80R), pertaining to member notification of possible violations of House Rules regarding members' employment practices or policies.

Despite a potential conflict of interest, I trust your committee will be as diligent in gathering information about your committee and the offices of its members as it will the rest of the House membership.

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me next week to discuss this important matter, and please let me know if I may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lon Burnam".

Lon Burnam
State Representative

CC: Various colleagues and members of the press