

State Senator Florence Shapiro: Washington, D.C. Politicians Now Going After Texas Classrooms-- Why They Must Be Stopped

From Washington, D.C., Congress aimed a canon at the heart of Texas. In what has become a regular attack on Texas by liberals in Washington, the latest development is unbelievable and disappointing because it has come from Texas Congressman Lloyd Doggett (D-Austin) and his fellow Texas Democrat colleagues.

The U.S. House of Representatives recently approved a Senate bill that will cost all of us, the taxpayers, and another \$26 billion under the guise of a necessary emergency assistance program. The bill contained language that singles out the Lone Star State and makes Texas the lone state in the union where the federal government dictates how we fund education. *The Dallas Morning News* wrote, "The bill, unfortunately, contains a misguided bull's-eye that Rep. Lloyd Doggett placed on his home state." And the day after this unfortunate vote, *The Wall Street Journal* reminded readers to "Keep in mind that this teacher bailout also amounts to a huge contribution by Democrats to their own election campaigns. The National Right to Work Committee estimates that two of every three teachers belong to unions."

When I first learned of this shenanigan in early July, I wrote to Congressman Doggett to express my bewilderment at his proposal. At that time, the Congressman attempted to attach his amendment to a war funding bill. My comments in the letter were, "It was with utter shock and amazement that I witnessed your involvement and brazen actions ... you willfully manipulated the amendment to satisfy a partisan agenda and, in so doing, placed a unique and undue burden on the State of Texas. Because of your actions in Washington, Texas--compared to other states--will be at a total disadvantage in education policy." I fully stand by this statement today.

Herein lies part of the problem. Once again, the strings attached to federal monies depend upon our state's commitment to utilize more money for education, binding future legislatures till 2013. That just won't stand in Texas--in fact, it is unconstitutional.

There is much that is wrong with this bill. But most egregious of all is Democrats playing politics with our children's education. As I wrote in that aforementioned letter to Congressman Doggett, "Ensuring a quality education for all the schoolchildren of Texas is my top priority. By all appearances, this move creates a political minefield for the citizens of Texas."

This is just another example of the overreach of Washington that threatens to harm our state for years to come. It merely provides one more reason why real change is necessary come November. Our future is at stake--are we going to let the Democrat congressmen continue to attack Texas? The time to stop them is now.

Since 1993, Senator Florence Shapiro has represented District 8, consisting of Collin and Dallas Counties. She chairs the Senate Committee on Education and also serves on the Senate Committees on Finance, Transportation and Homeland Security, and Administration.