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Contacts: Rep. Dunnam: Jerry Philips, 512.463.0508
Rep. Gallego: Kurt Meachum, 512.463.0566
Rep. Coleman: Ben Hallmark, 512.463.0524

House Democratic Leaders Oppose Gambling Legislation *~Don't Gamble with Our Children's Education~*

AUSTIN -- State Representatives Garnet Coleman, Jim Dunnam, and Pete Gallego took a public, principled stand against gambling today and asked the Republican House leadership to take gambling off the table this session.

"We want to take gambling off the table this session," said State Rep. Jim Dunnam. ***"If the Republicans want to gamble in Texas, then they have to vote to gamble, because we want it taken off the table."***

"Texans deserve a more reliable, stable and secure source of funding for critical state needs," said State Rep. Garnet Coleman. ***In the wake of devastating cuts in CHIP and Medicaid, we cannot provide Texas families a healthy future from the smoky, mirrored halls of a casino."***

Many of the same arguments used to bring the lottery to Texas have resurfaced in the current debate over gambling.

"Texans were fooled once into thinking gambling would fund public education," said State Rep. Pete P. Gallego, in reference to the lottery. ***"Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me."***

Gallego suggested that gambling is not the right solution to the current set of challenges facing Texas. ***"We can't afford to let the Legislature roll the dice with our children's future,"*** said Gallego. ***"The costs simply outweigh the benefits."***

Rep. Coleman noted that Speaker Craddick assigned gambling legislation a very low number, HJR 3, and gave the bill to a top lieutenant, the Chairman of House Appropriations.

"If the Republicans want to pass gambling, then they are going to have to overcome our objection," said Coleman. ***"When the chips were down, the House leadership failed to meet the needs of Texans families, and now they are asking us to gamble on their future."***

"Some Democratic representatives are against gambling on moral grounds, and others because gambling is the centerpiece of the immoral Republican tax increase that raises taxes for 88% percent of Texans while cutting taxes for the elite," said Rep. Dunnam. ***"The Republicans created a shortfall and now they want gambling to make up the difference. It's wrong to bet the future of our public schools on roulette wheels and slot machines."***

"The Republican leadership have painted themselves into a corner and now will resort to gambling to solve their problems," said Gallego. ***"We are taking this stand today to stop it. Don't gamble with our children's future."***