



# Senator Eliot Shapleigh

District 29

## Press Release

**Contact:**

Daniel Collins

(915) 544-1990

[daniel.collins@senate.state.tx.us](mailto:daniel.collins@senate.state.tx.us)



### For Immediate Release

March 9, 2009

## "VOTER SUPPRESSION"

*Voter ID "is a direct descendent of poll taxes, and of allowing only white male property owners to vote. In its effect it is racist, barbaric, antidemocratic and contrary to everything that made America great." - Royal Masset, former political director of the Republican Party of Texas, April 23, 2007.*

\*\*\*\*\*

**AUSTIN** - On Monday, March 9, 2009 Senator Eliot Shapleigh (D- El Paso) participated in a press conference with other Democratic members of the Texas Senate regarding [SB 362](#), which by special Senate rules will be heard in the Senate tomorrow. Senator Shapleigh issued the following statement:

"I want to share with you the [story of David Iglesias](#), the former U.S. Attorney for New Mexico. Appointed by the Bush White House in August 2001, Iglesias became embroiled in one of the largest scandals ever to hit the Department of Justice.

In 2006, the real priorities of Karl Rove's Republican voter fraud initiative became very clear when Iglesias got fired by the Bush Administration. Why? Because he refused to prosecute bogus, nonexistent cases of voter fraud.

[Click here](#) to view today's Senate press conference regarding voter suppression. (Real Media Player required)



After being made aware of Justice Department and state and national Republican Party interest in the issue, Iglesias set up a taskforce in 2004 to investigate. He included local, state, and federal law enforcement and both Democratic and Republican officials. But after looking at over 100 cases, he concluded that there were no prosecutable cases.

But this wasn't good enough—Karl Rove and the Bush Administration wanted indictments, especially leading up to the 2006 election. A Republican strategist in New Mexico summed it up succinctly in an [email from September 2004](#): "I believe the [voter] ID issue should be used at all levels—federal, state legislative races ... You are not going to find a better wedge issue."

- More -

800 WYOMING AVE., SUITE A • EL PASO, TEXAS 79902

(800) 544-1990 • (915) 544-1990

Iglesias later admitted that "[prosecuting even a few cases sends a very strong message and could actually result in suppressing minority voting.](#)" So the pressure from D.C. was placed squarely on Iglesias and other U.S. Attorneys around the nation.

But Iglesias was not willing to engage in "unlawful activities"—his words—to prosecute cases that just weren't there.

Let me emphasize this point: Iglesias—a loyal Bush appointee, a Republican who had previously run for statewide office—could not find evidence of voter fraud. And his determination to stick to the law and his values got him fired.

When asked how he would characterize using U.S. Attorneys to benefit a particular political party at the polls, Iglesias said: "It's reprehensible. It's unethical. It's unlawful. It very well may be criminal ... I know it's a marked departure from prior administrations, both Republican and Democrat, who understood that U.S. attorneys, as chief federal law enforcement officials, have to stay out of politics."

When asked why he thought he was fired, Iglesias said it was "for illicit, partisan political reasons. Specifically not coming up with voter fraud cases, number one. And number two not rushing forward indictments involving prominent Democrats during the election cycle."

When asked about the motivations of those pushing for voter fraud indictments, Iglesias stated that their motivations "were clearly partisan," going on to say that "there appears to be a growing body of evidence that suggests that there's voter suppression going on throughout the country."

The investigation into the firing of nine U.S. Attorneys continues to this day. Just last week, [Rove agreed to testify](#) before Congress under oath regarding his role.

Voter fraud is a "cucuy." It doesn't exist.

Royal Masset, the former political director of the Republican Party of Texas, stated that voter ID "is a direct descendent of poll taxes, and of allowing only white male property owners to vote. In its effect it is racist, barbaric, antidemocratic and contrary to everything that made America great."

Masset also stated that requiring photo IDs could cause enough of a dropoff in legitimate Democratic voting to add 3 percent to the Republican vote.

The Republican's bill is about Republicans scaring off just enough elderly, disabled, blacks and Hispanics to stay in power four more years—plain and simple."

\*\*\*\*\*

Newspapers across the state have published editorials condemning the Republicans' voter suppression efforts. These papers include [the Waco Tribune-Herald](#), [The Austin American Statesman](#),<sup>(2)</sup> [the Houston Chronicle](#), [the Fort Worth Star-Telegram](#), [the San Antonio Express-News](#) and [the Dallas Morning News](#). All these newspapers agree that legislators should be focusing their efforts on issues that matter to Texas - not on a partisan fight to solve a problem that doesn't exist.

-End-

800 WYOMING AVE., SUITE A • EL PASO, TEXAS 79902

---

(800) 544-1990 • (915) 544-1990