



Senator Eliot Shapleigh

District 29

Press Release



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SENATOR SHAPLEIGH RELEASES STATEMENT ON CHANGE TO TOP TEN PERCENT RULE

"Top Ten Percent works well. At UT-Austin, 93 percent of all El Paso students who were admitted there in 2008 were admitted under Top Ten. Why change what works?"

AUSTIN - Today, the Texas Senate passed SB 175, which would allow Texas Universities to admit graduates in the top 10 percent of their graduating high school class only until such students make up 50 percent of the incoming freshman class. Currently, the rule grants Texas high school students automatic admission to any of Texas' 35 public universities if they graduate in the top 10 percent of their class. The University of Texas at Austin is the only state university that would currently be affected by this change.

Senator Shapleigh offered the following statement on his opposition to changing the Top Ten Percent Rule:

"The Top Ten Percent Rule has ensured that all Texas students have an equal opportunity of attending the Texas college of their choice.

With the rule, minority students, rural students and students from smaller, poorer school districts would be put at a significant disadvantage when competing against their more-affluent peers. This will have a tremendous effect on students in El Paso. In 2008, 137 students from El Paso enrolled at UT-Austin. Of those, 128 students were accepted under the Top Ten Percent Rule.

Minority enrollment and geographical diversity at UT has increased noticeably since the law was passed. UT-Austin records show that the number of black students has gone from 1,353, or 3.7 percent of undergraduates, in fall 1997 to 1,803, or 4.8 percent, in fall 2008. The number of Hispanic students has risen from 5,234, or 14.2 percent of undergraduates, to 6,766, or 18.1 percent.

- More -

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The answer to high demand at schools like UT Austin and Texas A&M is greater state investment to create tier-one universities. In California, where state leaders invested in higher education quality since 1960, nine universities are now tier-one, with a total of 184,000 undergraduates now attending those schools. Instead of crushing students' dreams of attending a top Texas college, we need to work to create more top colleges for them to choose from.

Top Ten Percent works well. At UT-Austin, 93 percent of all El Paso students who were admitted there in 2008 were admitted under Top Ten. Why change what works?"

- End -

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