

TEXAS BORDERLANDS: FRONTIER OF THE FUTURE

Senator Eliot Shapleigh presents the 5th edition of the *Texas Borderlands: Frontier of the Future* report. The report chronicles the opportunities and challenges faced on the Texas-Mexico Border, and covers topics ranging from higher and public education to access to capital and credit, to immigration and border security.

Our Border is home to a proud and resilient people who live in fast growing communities, work hard to educate their children, and are full of hope for a prosperous future, which is the heart of the American Dream. Today, that dream is distant. Texas' "low-tax, low-service ideology" denies opportunity, lowers standards for quality education, and destroys access to health care for millions of low and middle-income Texans.

Texas continues to lead the U.S. in the percentage and number of children without health insurance, with about half of all uninsured Texas children currently eligible for Medicaid or CHIP, but enrolled in neither. Nearly half a million children that qualify for Medicaid aren't enrolled.

This systematic and institutional denial of opportunity and services in basic programs, like public education—programs that have created the foundation of prosperity and success for generations of working families throughout America's history—represents an era of "*The Two Texas*es." In this new era, an elite few grow and prosper by virtue of diversion of tax dollars from critical services while others, the vast majority of Texans, meet devastating challenges placed in their path because leaders value tax cuts over kids and budget cuts over the elderly.

Texas' record is reflected in the chart *Texas on the Brink*, which shows Texas' ranking among the 50 states. Our state ranks at the bottom or near the bottom on a number of key indicators reflecting education, health care, and quality of life.

Texas on the Brink (1st = Highest, 50th = Lowest)

Percentage of Uninsured Children	1st
Income Inequality Between the Rich and the Poor	9th
Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) Scores	46th
Percentage of Population over 25 with a High School Diploma	50th
Percentage of Non-Elderly Women with Health Insurance	50th
Rate of Women Aged 40+ Who Receive Mammograms	42nd
Rate of Women Aged 18+ Who Receive Pap Smears	46th
Cervical Cancer Rate	6th
Women's Voter Registration	31st
Women's Voter Turnout	49th
Percentage of Eligible Voters that Vote	50th

Today, our state is at a crossroads. Texans must demand a government that invests in a "21st century educational excellence." With a new administration in the White House and federal stimulus money available, now is the time to invest in our children and our future. It is time for a government that invests in great schools and opens the doors to great universities, not universities where the middle class can no longer attend because of tuition hikes. We must keep the promise of the American Dream that every generation can be more prosperous than the last. Each of us must affirm basic principles of opportunities and justice and fight a future where only a wealthy few succeed and the vast majority are left behind by a government led by those for whom tax cuts are more important than Texans.

Only then will our state truly shine as the beacon of hope, freedom and opportunity for every Texan.