

**Tom Schieffer Announcement
Of Exploratory Committee
March 2, 2009**

Today is March the 2nd, Texas Independence Day. It is the day when a group of patriots who were born in Mexico, the United States, Great Britain, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, France, Denmark and a host of other nations declared their independence from a government that had betrayed its promises and been seized by a military dictator.

March the 2nd was also the day when Texas' greatest hero was born. Sam Houston, who is still remembered by Texans for his personal courage, sense of honor and duty as well as his grand vision for Texas, was a man who lived his life by a simple motto – do right and risk the consequences.

Today, as we celebrate the one hundred and seventy third anniversary of our independence, Texans are worried about their future. They worry that they will lose their present jobs to the current recession or their future jobs to the effects of globalization. They worry about the education their children are getting. They worry about the health care they, their parents and their children are receiving. They worry about the effects of a state government that has become more ideological, more narrow and more partisan than it needs to be.

At the very time when Texas desperately needs leadership, people worry that we are experiencing a crisis of leadership. Our politics have become less substantive, less thoughtful, less creative and less innovative when our problems have become more serious, more complex and more challenging. We need to change that.

For the last eight years I have been serving my country abroad as an Ambassador of the United States and while I returned to Texas dozens of times during that time it pains me to say that the perception of Texas abroad is not what we in Texas want it to be. Texas to foreigners is often a place where J. R. Ewing and the fictional characters of the old TV Series Dallas are thought to be real. We need to change that.

We need to be sure that the world of tomorrow looks to Texas and not past Texas for its solutions. Texas needs leadership that reminds our citizens that we are no longer competing just against our fellow Americans. When you travel the globe as I have you know that Texas is competing against the best and the brightest in the world and they are hungry for success. We need to know that a child entering the first grade in Texas will be able to compete in twenty or thirty years with a child entering the first grade in China or India. If they cannot, then Texas will find itself slipping into the status of a third world country.

We live in a time when the world economy is increasingly based on knowledge. To participate in that economy we must do more in education. If we do not restore to the teaching profession the dignity and respect that it deserves, if we continue to starve education in Texas and act as if it is a burden rather than a blessing, if we ignore the fact that hundreds of thousands of young Texans are dropping out of school, if we continue to raise college tuition to make it harder and not easier for young people to get their education, then the Texas we leave to our children will be a Texas less than was given to us. We cannot in good conscience allow that to happen. We must prepare Texas for the future and not the past.

When I began my remarks, I talked about the significance of March the 2nd to the people of Texas. I failed to mention one other important event that occurred on March 2, 1861. That was the day that Texas voted to secede from the Union. The Governor at that time was Sam Houston. He told Texans that withdrawing from the Union would be disastrous for America and disastrous for Texas. He pleaded. He cajoled. He argued passionately for reconciliation and understanding,

but it was all to no avail. Those who appealed to fear and prejudice had won the day. They demanded that Governor Houston take an oath of allegiance to the Confederacy. Houston refused saying in a letter to the people of Texas that the governor's "... office holds no charm for me if it must be bought at the price of my principles." We need the spirit of Sam Houston to be with us again in Texas. We need leadership that will call forth the best that is in us, not the worst.

I believe it is time for those of us who love Texas to do right and risk the consequences. I have therefore decided to file the necessary papers to create an exploratory committee that will allow me to seek the Democratic Nomination for Governor of Texas. Over the next few months I will be traveling the state asking people if they believe as I do that we need new leadership. I have no illusions about the difficulty of the task ahead. I know that the road will be hard. But I also know that if someone does not travel that road, Texas will suffer. It is time for all of us to follow Sam Houston's lead and do our duty for Texas.