

PRESS RELEASE
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Contact: Enrique Marquez
dadephelanpress@gmail.com

Rep. Dade Phelan Announces Policy Staff Selections

AUSTIN - State Representative Dade Phelan (R-Beaumont) today announced his policy team for the 87th legislative session. Phelan is the presumptive Speaker of the Texas House, having secured the support of more than 140 of his colleagues.

“We’ve assembled a first-rate team of seasoned policy experts who understand the mechanics of government and know how to get things done for Texas,” said Rep. Dade Phelan. “I am privileged that these skilled professionals are devoting themselves to public service at this inflection point in our state’s history. Each will help the Texas House make good on the priorities that our citizens sent us here to accomplish: balancing our budget, protecting public health and safety, improving our business climate, and getting Texas back to work.”

The staff selections announced today will take effect upon Rep. Phelan's election as Speaker of the Texas House on January 12, 2021.

Andrea Chavez, Policy Advisor for Transportation, Local Government, County Affairs, and Urban Affairs - Andrea Chavez joins the Phelan team from the private sector where she currently works at a Texas government relations firm. Her previous experience includes working on government relations teams at two prominent law firms, a stint as an aide in the Texas House, and in campaigns across Texas.

Kory Curtis, Policy Advisor for Energy Resources, Environmental Regulation, International Relations & Economic Development, and Licensing & Administrative Procedures - Kory Curtis currently serves Rep. Phelan as Committee Director for the House Committee on State Affairs. Before that role, Kory staffed the House Committees on Insurance and Investments & Financial Services, and served as Capitol Director for Rep. Tan Parker.

Molly Czepiel, Policy Advisor for Human Services, Public Health, and County Affairs - Molly Czepiel currently serves as Government Relations Director for a global health plan. Molly held the positions of Associate Commissioner for Policy and Performance and Director of External Relations at the Texas Health and Human Service Commission. Her career started as a congressional aide before working as a legislative liaison for the Office of the Attorney General and policy analyst in the Texas Senate.

Ross Giesinger, Policy Advisor for State Affairs and Elections - Ross Giesinger currently serves as General Counsel and Legislative Director for State Senator Lois W. Kolkhorst, a role he has held since 2015. Ross worked as a drafting attorney for the Texas Legislative Council

during the 82nd and 83rd sessions. He is a graduate of The University of Texas at Austin and the SMU Dedman School of Law.

Danny Mittnacht, Policy Advisor for Insurance, Pensions, Investments & Financial Services, and Business & Industry - Danny Mittnacht currently serves as Rep. Jay Dean's Chief of Staff. Before working in the Legislature, Danny was active in political campaigns where he managed or consulted on dozens of state and federal campaigns. His career began in the Executive Office of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute.

Marissa Patton, Policy Advisor for Natural Resources, Agriculture & Livestock, Land & Resource Management, and Culture, Recreation & Tourism - Marissa Patton currently serves in the Texas Farm Bureau's legislative affairs department. Marissa previously worked at the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, handling state and federal legislative and regulatory issues. She began her career in the public sector working for U.S. Senator John Cornyn in Washington, D.C., and serving on his Senate Judiciary Committee staff.

Shakira J. Pumphrey, Policy Advisor for Criminal Jurisprudence, Corrections, Juvenile Justice & Family Issues, Homeland Security & Public Safety, and Defense & Veterans' Affairs - Shakira Pumphrey has served two Speakers on justice, public safety, defense, and veterans' affairs issues. Shakira graduated from the University of Central Arkansas with a B.S. in Sociology. She later received a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and a J.D. from Southern University Law Center in Baton Rouge.

Jimmy Skipton, Policy Advisor for Ways & Means - Jimmy Skipton currently serves as the Policy Director for the House Ways & Means Committee, where he advises on state and local tax policy. Jimmy previously served as legislative director for Rep. Drew Springer. Jimmy has worked at an international consulting firm, where he serviced clients in the oil and gas and power and utility sectors. A graduate of Tulane University, Jimmy is currently attending The University of Texas School of Law.

Daniel Warner, Policy Advisor for Higher Education and Public Education - Daniel Warner currently serves as Senior Policy Analyst for Senator Larry Taylor, covering various issues, including education and higher education policy. Daniel worked for Senator Jane Nelson in 2013. Daniel has worked for multiple Senate committees, including the Finance, Higher Education, Education, and the Select Committee on Property Tax Reform.

General Counsel Margo Cardwell will advise on issues related to Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence.

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