

June 20, 2007

The Honorable Rick Perry
Office of the Governor
P. O. Box 12428
Austin, TX 78711-2428

Dear Governor Perry:

Galveston College is very concerned about the action you made in vetoing \$153.0 million in House Bill 1, which was allocated for health insurance to eligible community college faculty and staff. For at least the last 25 years, this insurance has been considered one of the "elements of cost" as defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for state funding. By state law, the community colleges of Texas must provide this coverage to our eligible employees. The result of your veto will be that we must now examine how we will be able to fund this mandate. The only solution left to us is to fund the mandate with local funds. Galveston College will be forced to either raise local taxes or raise student tuition and fees at a time when the state is attempting to give tax relief and at a time when the colleges are being asked to increase the number of enrollments in order to "close the gap." Raising local taxes and student tuition and fees will be devastating.

Also, we are disturbed by your statement that we have falsified our appropriations request as pertaining to insurance. We know that state law does not allow group insurance premiums to be paid for employees whose salaries are paid by grant funds, auxiliary funds or physical plant accounts. Galveston College has strictly abided by this provision. In fact, we made our request on the same form that we have used successfully for years.

Texas is presently facing great challenges in educating our population in order to meet the demand for a trained workforce. The community colleges of Texas are attempting to meet this challenge. As you are aware, over 50% of all students enrolled in higher education in Texas are enrolled in our community colleges. We respectfully request that you reconsider your veto and work with the legislators to restore these much needed funds.

Sincerely,



William R. Auvenshine, Ed.D.
Interim President



Carl E. Kelly, Chairman
Board of Regents

cc: Senator Kyle Janek
Representative Craig Eiland
Representative Larry Taylor