

*From the Desk of*  
**David L. Cook**  
Texas House District 96

January 2, 2025

Dear Representative Martinez-Fischer,

Happy New Year! I saw the letter you sent earlier yesterday and wanted to take a moment to respond to some of the points you raised for the benefit of our colleagues. You've served in the House for decades and your understanding of its dynamics is clear. I appreciate the opportunity to engage in this dialogue with you.

The "traditional script" you reference, where a majority of Democratic members align with a minority of Republican members to elect the Speaker, has been a significant source of discord within the Republican Caucus dating back to 2009. After I secured the Republican Caucus nomination on December 7th and then began soliciting Democratic support, I found that many Democratic members share some of the same frustrations as Republicans. A handful of individuals in both caucuses have held power through the periods you reference in your letter, and their focus clearly has been on maintaining the status quo, rather than fostering meaningful change.

It speaks volumes that, while we were meeting as a Republican Caucus, the House Democratic Caucus was simultaneously putting out statements dictating who its members could support, specifically stating that Democratic members could support anyone but me. This makes it clear that certain members within the Democratic Caucus are not interested in changing how the House operates. Instead, they appear intent on preserving a system that primarily benefits their current positions, rather than one that serves the broader membership of the Texas House.

As you point out, our current predicament "has never been seen before," but it clearly stems from the influence of those who have been in leadership positions dating back to 2019. They continue to attempt to influence the narrative around this race. However, the broader membership, on both sides, is ready for something different.

There is no question that Chairman Burrows' decision to walk out on his colleagues, thus failing to honor the process he helped create years ago, has prolonged this race beyond what any of us expected. Be that as it may, we have pressed on and have had extremely productive conversations with members of your caucus about ideas to make our Chamber function better for all of us.

You are absolutely right that no Speaker should "make members voiceless or powerless." Every member has a voice, regardless of party, and should have the opportunity and resources to meaningfully participate in shaping policy and serve their constituents. One tangible way to assist all of us in that goal would be to increase our in-session office budgets to help us retain and recruit talented staff.

While we fundamentally disagree on the issue of school choice, I believe that all Texas families should have access to the best educational opportunities for their children. Over 90% of students in Texas are part of the public education system in Texas and thus it is essential for the House to address other critical educational

reforms, such as a significant overhaul or phasing out of the STAAR test and a much-needed pay raise for our teachers. It is also crucial for the House to carefully examine how we fund our public schools—specifically, transitioning to enrollment-based funding versus attendance-based funding. While I remain mindful of the potential impact of enrollment growth as a long-term cost driver to the state, this issue deserves thoughtful consideration and could serve as a point of common ground in the upcoming legislative session.

While you may not be aware of all the conversations happening, I can assure you that I have support amongst Democratic members. I've been mindful about putting out a list prematurely, as building a true list of 76 committed supporters takes time. But as you've pointed out, the time for those commitments is quickly approaching.

I agree that we have the opportunity to “change the fortunes of millions of Texans” and chart a new course for the future. By moving beyond the power struggles of the past, we can create a House that truly reflects the will of its members and gives each member a fair process and necessary access to successfully represent his/her district. I look forward to continuing our conversation and, hopefully, earning both your confidence and your vote.

In Commitment,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David L. Cook". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" being the most prominent.

**David L. Cook**

Texas House Republican Caucus Speaker Nominee

CC: Texas House Members