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STATE REP. RUTH JONES MCCLENDON FILES FOR RE-ELECTION

“While I’m extremely proud of my accomplishments over the past years, there's still a lot of work left to be done.”

SAN ANTONIO-- State Representative Ruth Jones McClendon (D-San Antonio) filed at the Bexar Democratic Party Headquarters for re-election to the Texas House of Representatives, House District 120. McClendon, having served 11 years in the Texas Legislature, is eager to continue her work on issues that are of dire importance to the constituents in the Eastern sector of Bexar County.

McClendon says: *While I’m extremely proud of my accomplishments over the past years, there's still a lot of work left to be done.* Rep. McClendon continues: *“For example, I'm pleased to have worked with my colleagues to pass an across-the-board teacher pay raise and restore health insurance coverage for over 127,000 children. Those are big accomplishments and we worked hard for them. Now we have to turn our attention to going further in that direction, especially now the Texas economy is doing so well”.*

McClendon says: *“One of the highlights of the 80th Regular Session for me was the passage of the 13th check for retired teachers, counselors, cafeteria workers and other school personnel. These hardworking Texans have not seen a benefit increase since 2001. They will now get that extra retirement check in January, 2008.”*

Additionally, McClendon is proud of her efforts to secure \$9.4 Million for the San Antonio Campus of Texas & M University as well the \$6.1 Million in state funds to enable the Department of State Health Services to develop a public safety triage and detoxification unit as a pilot project in Bexar County, commonly known as HAVEN FOR HOPE.

At the start of the 80th Regular Session, the Legislature was told that the state would have the largest surplus in history -- \$14.3 billion. The Legislature spent \$11 billion of that \$14.3 billion surplus on property tax cuts. Rep. McClendon said: *“That cut would have been better spent by increasing the homestead exemption for middle class families instead of on a simple rate cut, but I am pleased we were able to offer some relief. Increasing the homestead exemption will be one of my priorities in 2009”.*

“To compete in this global economy, Texas must have quality schools, first-rate health coverage, and affordable college tuition. Anything less would diminish our healthy business climate, which is the envy of almost every state in the nation. I’m anxious to continue working with my colleagues to make this happen,” says McClendon.

Representative McClendon Chairs the House Committee on Rules & Resolutions; she is a member of the Appropriations Committee, member of the Appropriations Education Subcommittee, Chair of Budget & Oversight for the Committee on Pensions & Investments, and member of the Sunset Advisory Commission.

Rep. McClendon is proud to have initiated and supported numerous measures that improved the quality of life for her constituents and others Texans, to include the following:

Higher Education

Maintained the Top 10% law, protecting the right of all students from across Texas to attend Texas' top tier universities. (SB 101).

Continued the UTSA Legislative Scholars Program (McClendon Scholars), a collaborative initiative between Rep. McClendon and UTSA to provide undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to serve as interns in the Texas House of Representatives during regular legislative sessions. Interns are selected by a committee of the faculty and each is given a stipend of \$10,000 (courtesy of AT&T and Coca Cola) while serving full-time during the 140 day Legislative Session.

Secured \$9.4 Million for Texas A&M San Antonio.

Secured \$24.8 Million increased funding over last biennium for University of Texas Health Science Center.

Secured \$11 Million increased funding over last biennium for University of Texas at San Antonio.

Secured \$4.8 Million increased funding over last biennium for Alamo Community College District (ACCD).

Passed HB 3934 - The pilot program designed in coordination with the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Higher Education Board, for ACCD to identify successful learning methodologies that would ensure greater college student success and higher college graduation rates in Texas, following students from high school graduation through completion of an associate's degree or certificate at the college. Supported by a \$500,000 appropriations rider approved in H.B.1, the pilot program would have moved Texas closer to the goals established in "Closing the Gaps" and created a better prepared, higher quality workforce; it was, however, vetoed by the Governor.

Increased funding for TEXAS Grants for college students.

Secured \$1.3 Million *New Campus Funding* for ACCD's Northeast Lakeview Campus, but was vetoed by the Governor.

Secured \$3 Million for UTHSC and \$3 Million for UTSA for their collaborative San Antonio Life Science Institute, but was vetoed by the Governor.

Public Education

McClendon House Bills 1105 & 1685 were incorporated into the conference committee version of SB 1846 that provided for the Teacher Retirement System to give eligible retired teachers, counselors, janitors, cafeteria workers and other personnel a 13th check in January, 2008 – up to \$2400.

Supported raising teacher salaries to the national average, but was forced to settle on an across-the-board teacher pay raise of \$425 a year.

Voted to prohibit the use of public school dollars for private school vouchers, thereby protecting our neighborhood schools.

Eliminated the TAKS test for public schools, opting instead to use end-of-course exams as a measurement for student performance.

Economic Development

Joint Authored HB3367, which statutorily provided for the creation of **RACKSPACE** in her House District 120. Rackspace Managed Hosting will invest \$100 million to transform a vacant San Antonio shopping mall into its new headquarters, and plans to add 4,000 new employees over the next five years. Worked to secure \$22 Million Texas Enterprise Funding to make the project a reality.

Passed HB 2514 to create an Arts & Entertainment District in East San Antonio, which gives the City of San Antonio another tool to increase tourism and generate economic development in House District 120.

Health & Human Services

Voted to restore many of the cuts made in 2003 for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). As many as 127,000 more children will receive CHIP coverage thanks to actions taken during the session.

Passed HB574 in the form of an amendment to SB1879 which establishes a committee to review pain management inconsistencies, which in turn, will set the stage to create methodologies to relieve pain and suffering of the elderly, disabled and other persons who are not able to obtain the proper medication because of issues governing the distribution of controlled substances.

Passed HB856 in the form of an amendment to SB10 which empowers Bexar County to implement a pilot program for a safe and anonymous needle exchange program to control and prevent infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and hepatitis in particular.

Voted to send a proposal to the voters to fund \$3 billion in bonds for cancer research, which was approved by the voters in the November Election.

Voted for legislation to continue reforms for Child Protective Services and strengthen oversight of the state's foster care system.

Residential Construction

Added numerous McClendon amendments to HB1686 to give the Texas Residential Construction Commission (TRCC) the authority *to go after home improvement contractors that make a living of "ripping off" unsuspecting, hardworking homeowners*. The Commission, created in 2003, will be able to exercise oversight of building and remodeling contractors in Texas who construct projects exceeding \$20,000 in cost. In addition to requiring the TRCC registration number in the contract documents with the homeowner and in local building permit documents, it provides more disciplinary powers, including the ability to discipline builders who do not register with TRCC, or who repeatedly fail to make an offer to repair or do not reasonably perform on an accepted offer to repair a building defect based on a third-party's recommendations or an appeal of the third-party inspector's recommendation. The Bill now authorizes the TRCC to issue "cease and desist orders" against those violating the TRCC Act and proscribes a penalty of up to \$100,000 for violations involving the misappropriation of funds or engaging in statutory or common law fraud. The bill significantly expands the authority of TRCC in order to ensure that the state-sponsored inspection and dispute resolution process is working correctly to resolve disputes between the homebuilder and the homebuyer.

Energy, the Environment, & State Parks

Supported an increase of \$200 million in the System Benefit Fund, which will directly go to lowering the cost of utility rates for low-income Texas families.

Voted for \$140 million for state park funding.

Voted for clean air legislation (SB 12) to reduce toxic emissions from automobiles, increase energy efficiency at state agencies, and create demonstration projects for solar power.

Elections & Open Government

Voted against restrictive voter ID legislation that would have made it more difficult for minorities, senior citizens, and the disabled to exercise their fundamental right to vote.

Voted to increase the online availability of information concerning how the state spends taxpayer dollars (HB 3430).

Supported a constitutional amendment that requires record votes on all third-reading votes of the legislature (already exists by rule, but now would be in the constitution).

Public Safety, Security, & Criminal Justice

Voted for legislation to address the horrific scandal at the Texas Youth Commission by forcing state leaders to protect our children's health and safety from abuses at TYC.

Voted for "Jessica's Law" legislation that cracks down on child sex predators.

Supported legislation to increase border security funding and put a stop to drug and human trafficking problems.