

## Prepared Statement of Representative John Culberson

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Spratt, thank you for giving us this valuable opportunity to share our ideas with you and the Budget Committee.

I am privileged to be here today as the third congressman from Texas' District 7 in Houston. The only other congressmen to represent our district were George Bush and Bill Archer. George Bush served two terms, and Chairman Archer served our district for thirty years before retiring. These two great men have created a special legacy of principled, honorable leadership in our district that I will do my best to uphold. This special legacy, combined with the length of Bill Archer's service and the large number of talented, motivated and well educated citizens in District 7 created an extremely competitive election campaign among a field of eight candidates last year.

This campaign is very fresh and vivid in my mind, as are the voices and opinions of our voters and my predecessors on the question that Chairman Jim Nussle has graciously asked us to answer today: What budget reforms would I and the people of District 7 like to see the Congress enact?

District Seven's highest budget priority is to preserve and protect America's balanced federal budget through ongoing fiscal discipline, tax cuts to reduce the tax surplus, and above all, by approving a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution. We know these principles work because we have proven them and tested them repeatedly in our state government in Texas.

I have just completed 14 years of service to 150,000 of District Seven's residents as their state representative. Over the last six years, I served alongside Governor George W. Bush and worked hard to help him enact the key elements of his legislative program: public education reform, criminal justice reform, juvenile justice reform, tort reform, and tax cuts to strengthen our economy and reduce Texas' record tax surpluses. We were successful on every count, and voters measured us against this record to re-elect George Bush as Governor in 1998.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I can testify from personal experience that statutory and constitutional balanced budget requirements have a very healthy effect on every detail of the appropriations process, and impose fiscal discipline on legislators, regulators, public employees and public agencies.

Based on this experience, I also want to suggest that Congress enact two other proven budget reforms. The first is a "speed governor" on spending similar to Article 8, Section 22 of the Texas Constitution and Chapter 316 of the Texas Government Code which state: "the rate of growth of appropriations from tax revenues not dedicated by [the] constitution [shall not] exceed the estimated rate of growth of the state's economy."

Second, I hope the Congress will enact Performance Based Budgeting as the foundation for our budget and appropriations process. As the attached exhibits show, Performance Based Budgeting has improved the accountability and efficiency of state agencies, according to an

overwhelming majority of Texas state leaders.

These are the most important budget reforms that I and the people I represent would suggest that the Congress enact to ensure that we preserve and protect our balanced federal budget, reduce the tax surplus and strengthen our nation's economy. As I learn more about the federal budget process, other ideas based on my experiences in Texas will undoubtedly come to mind. In the meantime, I look forward to working with you, Chairman Nussle, to complete our Budget Resolution in a timely manner so we can then move on to a detailed discussion of the budget reform ideas that I and my freshman colleagues have presented today.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify before the committee today.