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Texas PTA Media Release

For Immediate Release
November 3, 2011

Texas PTA Announces 2011 Legislative Honor Roll and Legislative Advocate of the Year

These legislators were leading advocates for the children of Texas

Austin, Texas - Today, members of Texas PTA announced the Legislative Advocate of the Year and eight Legislative Honor Roll members for their tremendous work on behalf of Texas children and youth during the 82nd session of the Texas Legislature.

Texas PTA's Legislative Advocate of the Year is Representative Donna Howard from Austin. This session, Representative Howard was engaged in many serious legislative debates related to the children and youth of Texas; however, she took a critical leadership role in the waning hours of the session when she carried an amendment to provide more funding in 2013 for Texas schools. The amendment would appropriate any Rainy Day Funds in excess of the \$6.5 billion projected in the fund by August 31, 2013, to public schools through regular program funding.

Representative Howard spoke passionately and persuasively, and a majority of the members of both parties in the Texas House voted for the amendment. While Representative Howard's amendment was eventually removed at the 11th hour by the 12-member Conference Committee, it was nevertheless a very important effort to secure needed revenue for public education.

"Representative Howard has been a champion for Texas children for many years, beginning long before her service in the Texas House," stated Sharon Goldblatt, Texas PTA President. "She brings energy, knowledge and a laser focus to all her efforts on behalf of students and public education. We are fortunate to have such a strong advocate for children, youth and public schools in the Texas House of Representatives."

Named to the Texas PTA Honor Roll are Representative Carol Alvarado, Representative Jimmie Don Aycock, Senator Robert Duncan, Representative Scott Hochberg, Representative Jose Menendez, Representative Diane Patrick, Senator Florence Shapiro and Representative Mark Strama.

"Each of these legislators took specific steps to improve opportunities for Texas children, whether by crafting language to require legislators to rewrite Texas' broken system of school funding, strengthening Texas' bullying statute, banning K-2, or broadening the number of math and science courses from which students may choose to satisfy graduation requirements. Each of them maintained the focus on Texas children and youth," said Sharon Goldblatt, Texas PTA President.

In October, 2009, the Texas PTA Legislative Action Committee created the Texas Legislative Honor Roll to recognize elected or appointed officials at the state level who supported the Texas PTA legislative agenda. Individuals selected demonstrate one or more of the following:

- Enhance the quality of life for children and youth
- Improve the quality of education for all children and youth
- Strengthen families
- Improve child safety standards
- Show support for children, youth, families and PTA-related positions

- Lend support to a current Texas PTA priority

Texas PTA is the largest grassroots association in Texas with nearly 600,000 members - parents, teachers and others who have a special interest in children, youth, families and schools. Texas PTA is a noncommercial, nonsectarian-nonpartisan organization that does not endorse any candidate or political party. For more information on Texas PTA, visit www.txpta.org or contact the state office at 800-TALK-PTA.

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