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SHAPIRO CHASTISES HOUSE FOR PUNTING SB 22

Senate Ed Chairwoman charges House "not ready to deal with, much less talk about, school finance;" says special session looming larger.

Sen. Florence Shapiro (R-Plano) took House members to the woodshed minutes ago for failing to pass a school finance bill. "With all due respect to our colleagues in the House, my concern is that we're going to be here for a special session," given that her school finance bill was "the last train out of the station."

In response to Shapiro's query, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst pointed out that the Senate's budget agreement is contingent on the passage of several bills, including SB 22. "We need to look for another bill to put that legislation on," he said, "and SB 1811 could be another vehicle for that."

Dewhurst said he shares Shapiro's concern about the House "kicking the can down road when we'd worked so hard to provide a permanent fix to school finance," adding that he thinks a majority of the Senate agrees.

"They seem to be dragging their feet on everything to do with public school finance," Shapiro said, noting that the House never actually took up a bill. She concluded by promising to deliver senators a letter tonight or tomorrow comparing the House's proration plan to the Senate position, adding, "I'm extremely concerned about what just took place in the House."

The next instant, the Senate doorkeeper announced — that's right, you guessed it — a messenger from the House. He was admitted without incident.

By Patrick Graves

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