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Lawmakers react to Perry's address

By Mike Ward
 AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF
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Both Republicans and Democrats liked Gov. Rick Perry's proposed tuition freeze, a cut in business taxes and more border security funding.

Republicans applauded his speech's appeal to the party's conservative base: a tough stand on eminent domain, requiring an ultrasound for pregnant women considering an abortion, less government and border security.

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Democrats talked more about what Perry didn't mention: additional money for public education, skyrocketing homeowner insurance rates and children's health.

"It could eliminate a lot of complaining from small businesses. ... I think we might be able to do a revenue-neutral bill on that right now."

— **Senate Finance Committee Chairman Steve Ogden,**

R-Bryan, on the proposed change in the business tax

"We need a fiscal note on that speech."

— **Former House Appropriations Committee Chairman Warren Chisum, R-Pampa, voicing concern about the cost of initiatives**

"It's a win for drivers. It's a win for the wind energy industry. It's a win for the automobile industry."

— **State Rep. Mark Strama, D-Austin, on a proposed incentive program for plug-in hybrid electric vehicles**

"It's music to these conservative ears."

— **State Sen. Dan Patrick, R-Houston, who proposed legislation to require an ultrasound for women considering an abortion**

"It should rank at the top of priorities. It affects our schools, our work force, our health care costs, our quality of life. It's costing billions of dollars."

— **Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples, on a push to combat obesity in schoolchildren**

"Gov. Perry's state of the state speech recognized that many of his positions over the last decade have created challenges confronting all Texans. Action is long overdue to bolster our infrastructure, make our universities more affordable, improve our schools, propel our clean energy industry and make the state budget honest and the tax system fair."

— **State Sen. Kirk Watson, D-Austin**

"It was a good campaign speech. A lot of the elements seem to be issues that come up in the Republican primary, those issues closer to the end of the speech. The opening parts of the speech concerning the state of the economy, the strength and the creation of jobs, those are issues that I believe we will address in the Legislature much further."

— **State Rep. Dawna Dukes, D-Austin**

"There was a lot of very positive rhetoric. ... Investing in higher education is paramount to ensuring our economic well-being and the economic future of our state."

— **State Rep. Donna Howard, D-Austin**

"It's the most alarming and significant threat to homeland security that we have right now."

— **Senate Transportation and Homeland Security Committee Chairman John Carona, R-Dallas, on the**

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"Health insurance? Not touched. Homeowners insurance. Not touched. Public school funding. Not touched. It played to his base, and that's fine. It's a starting point for our discussions."

— **State Sen. Royce West, D-Dallas**

mward@statesman.com; 445-1712

Additional information from staff writers Corrie MacLaggan, Stephanie Wang and Laylan Copelin.

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