

By: Alonzo

H.R. No. 502

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, In February 2003 the members of the National  
2 Governor's Association issued a policy statement recognizing that  
3 states will continue to face budget shortfalls that may total more  
4 than \$80 billion for fiscal year 2004; and

5           WHEREAS, Weak growth in the economy has caused nearly all  
6 states to experience a drastic decline in revenues for each of the  
7 last three years; in its Fiscal Survey of the States, the National  
8 Governor's Association found that total state tax collections fell  
9 by six percent in 2002, even as spending grew by 1.3 percent; and

10           WHEREAS, State administrators of federal programs must  
11 grapple with complying with the federal changes for health care  
12 coverage, education, and homeland security while facing huge budget  
13 deficits; and

14           WHEREAS, State administrators also must make the difficult  
15 decision of raising taxes or cutting vital services at a time when  
16 the need for health insurance coverage by low-income children, the  
17 elderly, and disabled adults is greatest and at a time when the cost  
18 of prescription drugs and the delivery of medical services is  
19 soaring; and

20           WHEREAS, In October 2002 the states lost \$1.2 billion that  
21 had been appropriated by the congress to provide health care  
22 coverage under the State Children's Health Insurance Program  
23 (S-CHIP) when that money reverted to the federal treasury because  
24 it was unclaimed by the states; despite appeals from the states to

1 do so, the congress did nothing to restore the funding; and

2 WHEREAS, If a bipartisan compromise on the allocation of  
3 S-CHIP funds is not reached by the congress this year, the states  
4 are scheduled to lose yet another \$1.5 billion in October 2003; and

5 WHEREAS, Forty-two states are planning to cut some optional  
6 Medicaid services in fiscal year 2004, including prescription drug  
7 coverage and coverage for children and pregnant women just above  
8 the poverty line; and

9 WHEREAS, Federal funding should increase for education  
10 spending under a provision in the No Child Left Behind Act that  
11 requires states to test elementary and secondary students regularly  
12 in reading and mathematics and for aid to the states for the cost of  
13 educating children with disabilities under the Individuals with  
14 Disabilities Education Act; and

15 WHEREAS, The current appropriations bill signed earlier this  
16 month contains only \$1.3 billion for state and local governments to  
17 pay for counterterrorism training and equipment; yet, an earlier  
18 version of the appropriations bill contained \$3.5 billion; the  
19 total appropriation for counterterrorism does not provide enough  
20 money to protect against terrorist attacks on American soil; and

21 WHEREAS, The states are now entering their third year with  
22 declining revenues and cannot face a future with even less revenue  
23 to carry out federal program obligations; now, therefore, be it

24 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 78th Texas  
25 Legislature hereby request the President of the United States to  
26 recognize that Texas and nearly every other state is in fiscal  
27 crisis and that cutting services and funding to the states should be

1 a last resort; and, be it further

2           RESOLVED, That the chief clerk of the Texas House of  
3 Representatives of the 78th Legislature forward an official copy of  
4 this resolution to the President of the United States.