

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



RICHARD PEÑA RAYMOND

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 42

October 31, 2019

Dear Colleague,

I am writing about the possible election of a new Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, if Governor Abbott decides to call a Special Session. If we are going to elect an “Interim Speaker,” I hope you will consider electing someone who will not be running for re-election to the House. I believe a member who is not running for re-election can hold that position for the next year to 14 months in a responsible manner.

The recent events involving the Speaker have left Texans and all of us, as members of the House of Representatives, shaking our heads and wondering how this happened. I cannot help but reflect on how we move forward — not as Democrats or Republicans — but as members in whom the people of Texas have placed their trust.

I fully understand we are about to begin a political year. But before we get to that, we must come together as colleagues to make things better in the Texas House of Representatives.

Speaker Bonnen’s announcement that he will not seek re-election to the House was an important step. There are many who believe Speaker Bonnen should resign now. I, too, believe he should resign as Speaker. I believe anyone who is objective about it would see it is the best way to begin the healing process and the re-building of trust that must happen.

To that end, there is a possibility of a Special Session which would allow us to elect a new Speaker. I understand discussions are being had about electing an “Interim Speaker” who would serve as a “place holder” or “caretaker” Speaker – someone who would not be a candidate for Speaker in January 2021, when the next session begins. Calling a special session is entirely up to Governor Abbott — but electing a new Speaker and how we go about doing it is entirely up to us.

I believe that any “Interim Speaker” should not only be someone who won’t seek re-election as speaker, but who also is not standing for reelection in 2020. They should be free of the concerns inherent in seeking re-election and from any other electoral political concerns. An interim speaker should be entirely focused on healing the wounds we’ve suffered and restoring the trust that has been lost.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Peña Raymond".