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*Leonard,
Congratulations on a great job.
See page E 1508*

*Ron
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LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM
MAYOR SCARCELLA OF STAFF-
FORD, TEXAS

HON. RON PAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 19, 2009

Mr. PAUL. Madam Speaker, public officials looking for ways to increase economic growth and attract new residents and businesses to their cities, counties, or states could learn a lot from the city of Stafford, Texas, and Mayor Leonard Scarcella. Stafford has flourished since 1995 when, under Mayor Scarcella's leadership, the city eliminated the property tax.

Thanks to the absence of property taxes, Stafford residents enjoy cheaper mortgages and have more disposable income than similarly situated residents of towns with property taxes. The extra income as a result of the freedom from property taxes is particularly beneficial during today's tough economic times.

The loss of property tax revenue has not deprived Stafford residents of quality city services; in fact, Stafford resident Alice Rolston told the Houston Chronicle that the police check on her home when she is on vacation, many homeowners living in towns with high property taxes can't count on that type of service.

Entrepreneurs looking to start up businesses are attracted to Stafford because of the lack of property taxes, Fortune magazine ranks Stafford the 36th best American city to start and run a small business.

While Stafford sales, franchise, and permit fees account for some of its ability to operate without a property tax, the major factor in the city's success is the city's fiscally prudent management. Stafford Councilman Cecil Willis says the mayor watches every penny in the city's budget. City employees often perform two or more functions and the city council even debates whether to authorize the purchase of light bulbs and pencils.

Madam Speaker, Mayor Scarcella is also a good argument against term limits, as he is one of the few elected officials who remains as committed to low taxes today as when he led the fight to eliminate the property tax. Mayor Scarcella should serve as a role model to us all in how to effectively govern without burdening the people with excessive taxes.