

# Association of Texas Professional Educators

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## **Olney teacher heads to DC to talk education issues**

The president of the nation's largest nonunion educator association led a team to Capitol Hill last week to discuss how federal regulations affect Texas public schools.

Sam Spurlock, an Olney Junior High School science teacher and state president of the 112,000-member Association of Texas Professional Educators, visited House members, congressional staffers and other education officials during the trip.

“ATPE is the largest and most influential educators group in Texas, and our membership consists of some of the most talented individuals in the field of education,” said Spurlock. “This trip allows ATPE to reinforce the long-standing reputation we have with our elected officials in Washington.”

During the four-day jaunt, Spurlock and other ATPE representatives held meetings with Rep. Randy Neugebauer and aides for other members of the Texas congressional delegation, including senators Kay Bailey Hutchinson and John Cornyn. The group discussed a variety of challenges facing Texas public schools, such as the impending approval of Texas' application for stimulus funds and the school finance plan by the U.S. Department of Education.

Spurlock also encouraged Texas lawmakers to support the Public Servant Retirement Protection Act by Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchinson and Rep. Kevin Brady, which would adjust the formula for determining the Social Security benefits of public servants to properly reflect the amount paid into the Social Security system. Currently, an eligible educator's benefits are tied directly to the number of years the individual paid into Social Security rather than the amount paid, potentially decreasing individual benefits by thousands of dollars each year.

“Like many public servants, teachers have dedicated their lives to improving our country, yet they don't receive the same fruits of their labor as other citizens,” said Spurlock. “We're encouraged to see many inside the Beltway are working to right this ongoing problem.”

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*The 112,000-member Association of Texas Professional Educators is the largest educators' group in Texas and the largest nonunion educators' group nationwide. Its membership consists of classroom teachers, para-educators, administrators, college students and retired educators. ATPE is committed to advocating for better benefits for all educators, promoting a collaborative work environment and the right of educators to choose the association they feel represents their interests, and providing the best education possible for all Texas school children.*