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#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Joe Straus awarded ATPE's highest honor

*Straus honored by thousands of teachers across Texas for his advocacy and defense of public education during his tenure*



*Byron Hildebrand (left) presenting Rep. Joe Straus with his award.*

**AUSTIN, Texas**—[The Association of Texas Professional Educators](http://The Association of Texas Professional Educators) (ATPE) has recognized Rep. **Joe Straus**, current Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, with its highest honor, the Judy Coyle Texas Liberty Award, for his ongoing and passionate defense of public education while in office.

Straus is renowned by Texans on both sides of the political aisle for his statesmanship and focus on the practical priorities of everyday Texans, such as public education. His recognition as the recipient of the 2018 Judy Coyle Texas Liberty Award, named after ATPE founding member Judy Coyle, was announced at the 2018 ATPE Summit in Dallas, which was attended 1,000 ATPE members and public educators.

“Rep. Joe Straus has been one of the most consistent defenders of public education in the Texas House of Representatives, and that’s why ATPE wants to recognize him and his important work,” said 2017-18 ATPE State President **Carl Garner Jr.** “Under his leadership, the Texas House has stood as the front line of defense for public education in the state, working to reform the school finance system and provide better funding for Texas’s 5.4 million schoolchildren.”

A San Antonio native and fifth-generation Texan, Straus, a Republican, was elected Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives in 2005 by a bipartisan coalition of Republicans and Democrats. Straus has now served seven sessions as state representative for House District 121 in San Antonio, and he has presided over the Texas

House for five consecutive sessions since 2009, tying the record for longest-serving Speaker in Texas history.

The Texas House of Representatives, under his leadership, has stood firm against repeated efforts to defund and privatize the public school system, and focusing its attention on investing in education and children's services.

Straus also stood up for all Texas teachers when he backed educators' efforts to encourage a culture of voting and called out special interests and other elected officials for fighting against public education.

In October, Straus announced his plans to retire to private life in San Antonio, where he has an insurance, investments and executive benefits practice.

"We as public educators want to thank and commend Speaker Straus for his many years of dedicated service to the state of Texas," said 2018-19 State President **Byron Hildebrand**, a San Antonio resident, who presented Straus with his award at his office on July 24. "For many years, he was Texas educators' most dependable champion in the Texas legislature. It's for this reason that he was most deserving of ATPE's highest honor. The association wishes him all the best in his future endeavors."

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### **About the Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)**

ATPE has been a strong voice for Texas educators since 1980. It is the leading educators' association in Texas with approximately 100,000 members statewide. With its strong collaborative philosophy, ATPE speaks for classroom teachers, administrators, future, retired and para-educators and works to create better opportunities for Texas's five million public school students. ATPE is the ally and the voice of Texas public education. Learn more about ATPE at [atpe.org](http://atpe.org).