Dean Thompson names six former Speakers to transition team

(AUSTIN, TX, NOV. 10, 2026) — State Rep. Senfronia Thompson, the Dean of the Texas House, has named six former Speakers of the Texas House to help her prepare to lead the chamber as its next Speaker.

The former Speakers — Democrats Ben Barnes, Gib Lewis and Pete Laney, as well as Republicans Joe Straus, Dennis Bonnen and Dade Phelan — have agreed to serve as Dean Thompson's transition team. They will advise her before the 90th Texas Legislature convenes on January 12, 2027.

"These former Speakers know the House does its best work when Members treat each other with respect, put their districts first and take care of the people's business," Dean Thompson said. "I'm grateful that they're willing to help the House get off to a good start. Not many people have held the Speaker's gavel, and I am eager to hear ideas and advice from some who have."

Dean Thompson announced last week that she has secured more than enough support from a growing bipartisan coalition of Members to become the next Speaker. She is now focused on preparing the House for a successful session.

Dean Thompson, who has represented Harris County in the House since 1973, will be the first Black Speaker and the first woman in the role. She represents House District 141.

The former Speakers who will serve on Dean Thompson's transition team offered the following words of support:

"Texas is facing serious challenges, and this session will ask a great deal of the House. Senfronia Thompson is the leader this moment calls for. Over more than five decades, she has seen every kind of session, worked with Members from every corner of the state and both sides of the aisle, and learned what it takes to turn good ideas into law. That kind of knowledge can't be

taught or rushed. It's earned over a lifetime of service, and it's exactly what Texas needs right now." — **The Hon. Ben Barnes, Speaker of the House, 1965-1969**

"It is my honor to serve on the transition team for Representative Senfronia Thompson. I served with her as both a Member of the Texas House when she was elected in 1973 and as the Speaker for ten years. She will bring a vast institutional knowledge to the podium with a fair hand, a necessary sense of purpose, and the judgment needed to lead this body. I look forward to assisting her in this transition of power and have always been proud to call her my friend." — **The Hon. Gib Lewis, Speaker of the House, 1983-1993**

"Ms. Thompson and I entered the legislature the same year – 1973 – back when 95 percent of the Members looked more like me than her. So it wasn't easy for her to fit in. But I watched her through the years working hard, building relationships and earning respect. She's been there when the House functioned well and when it didn't. She knows that if you respect the process and respect the other Members, people from different backgrounds and different political views can come together to find solutions to difficult problems for the benefit of all Texans. She has the energy and enthusiasm of a freshman Member and the wisdom of the most senior Member." — **The Hon. Pete Laney, Speaker of the House, 1993-2003**

"I am honored to help my friend Ms. Thompson as she prepares to provide the trusted leadership that the Texas House needs. She is committed to bringing the House together to focus on serious challenges, and I know Ms. Thompson and the House will succeed. I'm happy to support someone who has been so helpful to all her colleagues through the years." — **The Hon. Joe Straus, Speaker of the House, 2009-2019**

"In our many years serving together, I have seen firsthand Ms. Thompson's strength, wisdom, and deep love for the Texas House. In her words, 'we know how to put partisanship aside on many issues and work on the issues themselves.' That is the House she will lead. It is a privilege to call her my friend and to serve on her transition team as she carries out that vision." — **The Hon. Dennis Bonnen, Speaker of the House, 2019-2021**

"Ms. Thompson has served this chamber for more than five decades, and few understand its traditions better than she does. The Texas House works best when its Members put people before party: when we come together, work together, and govern in a bipartisan way for the good of all Texans. I look forward to working alongside her to restore those traditions and to make the 90th session one that Texans can be proud of." — **The Hon. Dade Phelan, Speaker of the House, 2021-2025**

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