

The Reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools & Community Self-Determination Act

PREPARED BY THE PARTNERSHIP FOR RURAL AMERICA CAMPAIGN

FACTS ABOUT TEXAS COUNTIES AND SCHOOLS

- Texas School Districts and Counties receive approximately \$4.4 million in annual funding from SRSCA
- 12 rural counties and 52 school districts in Texas receive annual funding from SRSCA
- Reauthorization of SRSCA is a priority for rural communities

LEARN MORE ABOUT SRSCA...

About the Partnership for Rural America Campaign	2
Total SRSCA payments 2008 through 2011 to Texas Counties	3
The History of SRSCA Legislation	5
Reauthorization of SRSCA	5
Picture of SRSCA Funding to Texas School Districts	6
SRSCA Payment by Congressional District	7



National Forest Counties & Schools Coalition

Why Do We Call SRSCA a “Contract”?

The Secure Rural Schools & Community Self-Determination Act is a “contract” based upon a historic partnership between the federal government and forested counties.

In 1911, the Weeks Act authorized the purchase of lands in the eastern and southern US to protect the headwaters of navigable streams. These lands were to be maintained as National Forests and the Act required that, “five percentum of all monies received during any fiscal year from each National Forest...shall be paid to the States...for the benefit of the public schools and public roads of the county or counties in which such National Forests are situated...” In 1913 Agricultural Appropriations Bill language was added to the Weeks Act wherein

the 5% was changed to 25% of revenue generated by activity on these lands.

The Clarke McNary Act of 1924 expanded the purchase authority to the rest of the U.S. and eliminated the requirement that the lands be acquired to protect navigable waters.

The 25% return was critical to the health of rural forested county schools and services. This is especially true as nationwide National Forests include 190 million acres and can cover as much as 87% of land mass in some counties. The 25% share worked well until the



Angelina National Forest—TX

1980’s when harvesting was greatly reduced by environmental laws and public policy changes. This created a fiscal crisis for rural counties and schools. The “contract” was in jeopardy.

In response, Congress passed the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act in 2000 to ensure the terms of the contract were met. In many cases it is the only thing standing between rural counties and schools and financial ruin.

In 2008, SRSCA provided approximately \$520 million in funding to 729 rural counties and school districts across the nation.

Reauthorization of SRSCA is critical for resource constrained rural Texas counties, schools and communities.

SRSCA Funding to Texas

- In 2008, Texas school districts and counties received \$4.43 million in funding from SRSCA
- From 2008 to 2011, rural Texas is projected to receive \$14,641,133 SRSCA Funding
- Texas’s SRSCA funding will decline by 78% from \$4.43 million in 2008 to \$967,528 in 2012—a loss of \$3.46 million

**Take an Active Role
Now: Join the
SRSCA
Reauthorization Effort
in Texas**

*Texas Counties affected
by the Act should take a
leading role in the
reauthorization
Campaign.*

Participate in the
Campaign and the
grass roots efforts by
becoming a member of
a Regional Coalition
Action Team.

**Sign up on our
website or contact:
Joel Yelverton, Marc
Kelley, or
Carolyn
Wasem at
(877) 778-
7252.**

About the Partnership for Rural America Campaign

Our Goal:

To renew the contract between the Federal government and rural communities through a long-term (ten-year) reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (County Revenue Sharing Programs).

Our Purpose:

The purpose of the Partnership for Rural America is to promote the economic and social health of rural America by actively building a broad-based partnership to support the long-term reauthorization and appropriation of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act.

The Partnership for Rural America Campaign provides interactive maps of state and county level SRSCS payments on our website.

Link to our website to find additional information on the history of SRSCA and additional information about funding for your county or state, or **sign up to be a volunteer to support our activities on behalf of Texas.**

<http://www.partnershipforruralamerica.org>

"The reauthorization of SRSCA is key to fulfilling the contract made between the federal government and our local counties and schools, dating all the way back to 1908. More than 50 rural school districts in East Texas receive SRSCA funding. This program is vital to ensure that the quality of education in our rural schools will not suffer from the federal government's failure to live up to the commitment it made a century ago."

- Charles Watson, Sabine County Judge

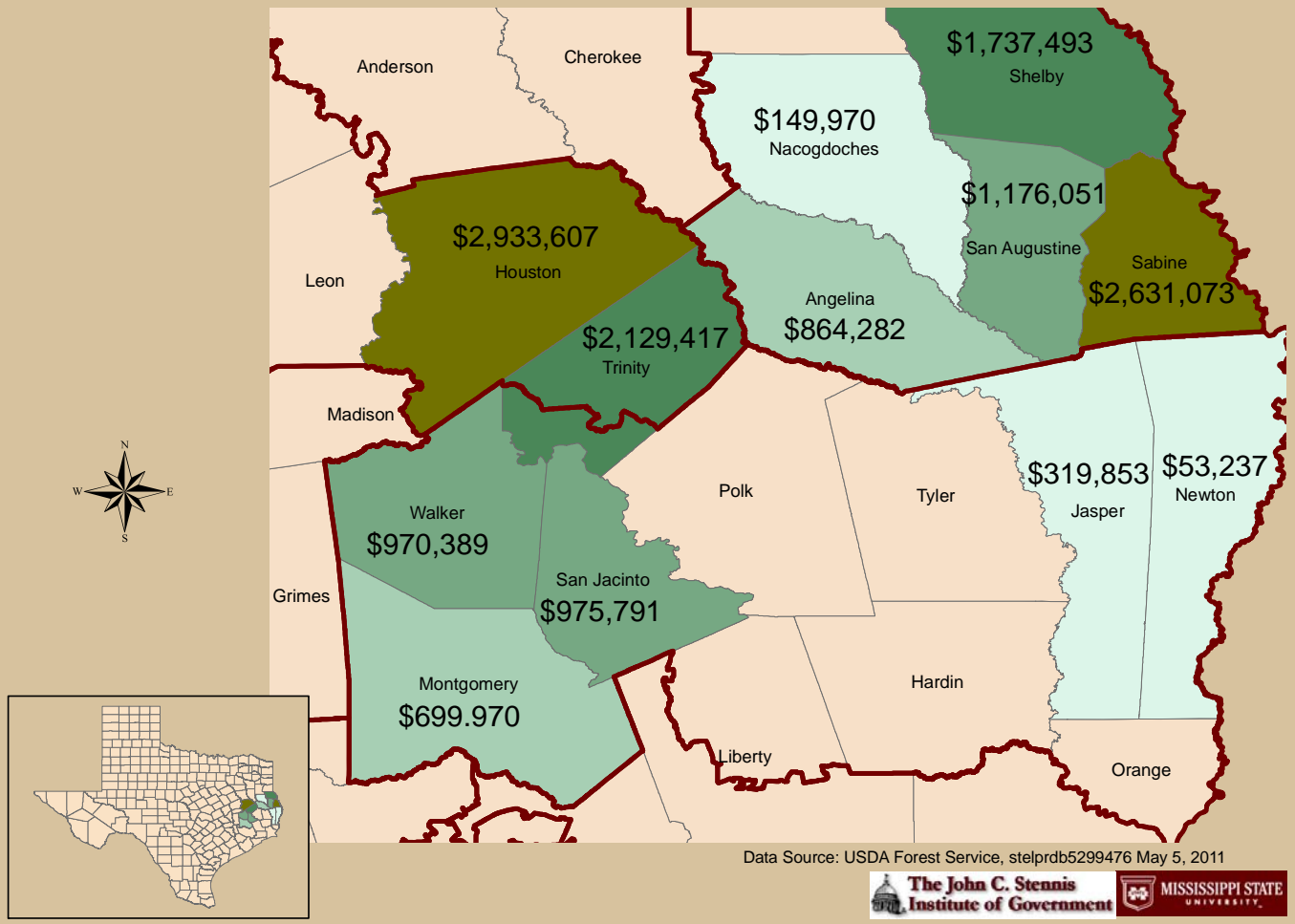
Our Partnership with the National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition

A nationwide Partnership for Rural America Campaign was initiated by the National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition in 2009. The Partnership for Rural America Campaign works together with the National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition to provide support for the reauthorization of funding for SRSCA. The mission of the National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition is to actively initiate, coordinate, and monitor activities regarding the multiple use management of public and private lands that affect their health, productivity, and sustainability; these activities affect the economic and social vitality of forest and rural county communities, families, schools, and local governments.

Activities of the National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition may include, but are not limited to:

- Monitoring and supporting full implementation of the counties and schools safety net legislation. Actively engaging with those activities which support and enhance the implementation of the legislation.
- Monitoring and engaging in development of policy, regulations, and legislation.
- Initiating and coordinating communications, media outreach, education, and public relations programs.
- Collaborating with other organizations in monitoring and supporting key legislation.

**Secure Rural School & Community Self-Determination Act of 2008 (SRSCA)
Total Funding to Texas Counties 2008 through 2011 = \$14,641,133**



One of the real success stories of SRSCA in Texas has been the Davy Crockett Resource Advisory Committee (RAC). Funded by Title II funds from Houston and Trinity counties, the RAC has completed many important projects within the Davy Crockett National Forest:

- Restoration and re-opening of Kickapoo Recreation Area (\$328,186)
- Renovation of bathhouse at Ratcliff Lake National Recreation Area (\$175,000)
- Improvements to roads within Ratcliff Lake National Recreation Area (\$275,000)
- Improvements to roads accessing Piney Creek Horse Camp (\$127,125)
- A Fuel reduction project to reduce fire danger near the City of Groveton (\$250,000)
- Road improvements providing public access to Big

- Slough Wilderness Area (\$213,000)
- Improvements to various county roads providing National Forest access (\$473,501)
- Improved access to Neches Bluff Scenic Overlook (\$3,000)
- Stewardship projects currently in process (\$767,622)

“The RAC allows local government officials, business people, and representatives of environmental organizations to meet at the table and find solutions that benefit everyone, rather than becoming involved in costly litigation.”

- R.C. “Chris” von Doenhoff,
Davy Crockett RAC Chairman

SRSCA Payments to Texas 2008 through 2012 by County

County	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011 Projected	FY 2012 estimated*	Decrease from 2008 to 2012
Angelina	\$268,761	\$241,885	\$217,995	\$135,641	\$54,771	-\$213,989
Houston	\$890,094	\$801,084	\$721,965	\$520,465	\$229,005	-\$661,088
Jasper	\$96,466	\$86,819	\$78,244	\$58,323	\$19,745	-\$76,720
Montgomery	\$233,328	\$209,996	\$189,255	\$67,391	\$60,623	-\$172,705
Nacogdoches	\$43,122	\$38,810	\$34,977	\$33,061	\$10,640	-\$32,482
Newton	\$15,477	\$13,930	\$12,554	\$11,276	\$2,447	-\$13,031
Sabine	\$831,396	\$748,257	\$674,355	\$377,065	\$131,213	-\$700,183
San Augustine	\$336,316	\$302,684	\$272,790	\$264,261	\$66,190	-\$270,126
San Jacinto	\$294,167	\$264,750	\$238,602	\$178,271	\$76,979	-\$217,188
Shelby	\$517,274	\$465,547	\$419,567	\$335,105	\$81,464	-\$435,811
Trinity	\$638,854	\$574,969	\$518,182	\$397,412	\$165,262	-\$473,592
Walker	\$264,867	\$238,380	\$214,837	\$252,305	\$69,188	-\$195,679
Total	\$4,430,123	\$3,987,111	\$3,593,322	\$2,630,576	\$967,528	-\$3,462,596

* Source: USDA Forest Service, Estimated county share of 25% payments for FY 2010. When the SRSCA expires at the end of fiscal year 2011, payments to states will be a 25-percent share of a rolling 7-year average annual receipts.

SRSCA Payments are Critical to Public Schools in East Texas

In 2009, the San Augustine Independent School District had 866 students enrolled in grades K—12; approximately 80 percent of these students are economically disadvantaged. The San Augustine School District is a technologically progressive school district that uses technology to enhance the quality of education; it provides parents, students, and teachers with online access to educational tools and school information. For example, the district maintains an online Parent Portal to CSCOPE, an internet learning tool that provides parents with information on how to help their children with their studies. The school district employs 69 teachers; teachers in the San Augustine School District have, on average, 17.6 years of experience and 33.9% of the teachers have an advanced degree. The average salary for teachers in the San Augustine School District is \$42,644. The cost of education in the San Augustine school district was \$10,852 per pupil. Teachers and administrators in the San Augustine school district are overcoming the wide range of barriers to academic success that are faced by students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. In 2008, the longitudinal high school graduation rate was 93.1 percent.

San Augustine County will receive \$1,176,051 in SRSCA funding over the period 2008 to 2011. After 2011, this amount will drop to \$66,190. Funding from SRSCA provides support to the schools in San Augustine County—*how will the loss of these funds impact the students in the San Augustine School District?*

The History of SRSCA Legislation



Sam Houston National Forest —
photo by Jakub Velimsky

President Teddy Roosevelt developed and implemented the policy of conserving lands for multi-use. He also understood the economic challenges that this placed on rural communities. To

address this challenge, he established a revenue sharing plan specifying 25% of all revenues from National Forests would be returned to forested counties. This law worked for nearly a century. However, in the 1980s national resource policies substantially diminished the revenue-generating activity in the forests. In 2000 the *Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act* (P.L. 106-393) was enacted. The goal of the Act was to provide assistance to rural counties and schools affected by declining revenues from timber harvests on federal lands.

“These funds are used for schools and roads,

to create employment opportunities, to maintain current infrastructure, and to improve the health of watershed and ecosystems” (USDA Forest Service Release No. 0814, October 8, 2008).

On October 3, 2008, the *Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act* (P.L. 110-343) was enacted; it reauthorized and amended SRSCA 2000 to continue, on a sliding payment scale, through 2011.

Efforts to assure that SRSCA is reauthorized are underway today.

Reauthorization of SRSCA

In Texas, rural counties must fund education and maintain roads on a tax base that is constrained by high child poverty rates, a limited business tax base, and a property tax base that is restricted by the tax-exempt status of national forest land within their boundaries. Secure, reliable payments from SRSCA are an essential source of revenues that enable rural counties to meet their financial obligations.

The *Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act* will expire in 2011. The reauthorization of SRSCA will ensure that students receive essential educational services and that rural communities have funding for roads, conservation projects, Search and Rescue missions, (a safety structure for residents and visitors) and fire pre-

vention programs. Funding from SRSCA also provides necessary revenue to cash-strapped rural school districts. It is important for Congress to commit the resources necessary to ensure that rural communities do not have to make further cuts to children’s education or further reduce vital services.

In 2009, counties and school districts began seeking support for the reauthorization of SRSCA to secure this important source of revenue for all rural counties and school districts.



Davy Crockett National Forest
—photo by Gerald McLeod

A Picture of Rural School Districts that Receive SRSCA Funding

There were 143,589 students enrolled in the 52 Texas School Districts that received SRSCA funding in 2008.; there are approximately 68,500 students that are economically disadvantaged enrolled in these 52 Texas school districts. Thirty-three (33) of the 52 SRSCA school districts in Texas have a poverty rate that exceeds 50% and in 11 of the school districts the percentage of economically disadvantaged students exceeds 70% (Source: Texas Department of Education). In Congressional District 1, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students was 85 percent in the Tenaha School District of Shelby County; in 2008, Shelby County received \$517,274 in SRSCA funding. In Congressional District 6, 72% of the students enrolled in Houston County's Crockett School District were economically disadvantaged; in 2008, Houston County received \$890,094 in SRSCA funding. In Walker County (Congressional District 8), among the 6,871 students enrolled in the Huntsville and New Waverly school districts there were 3,830 (55.7%) students who were economically disadvantaged. In 2008, Walker County received \$264,867 in SRSCA payments; if SRSCA is not reauthorized, this amount will fall to \$69,188 in 2012. **SRSCA dollars are critical to student success.**

The loss of SRSCA funding will have serious consequences for rural school districts. Children in rural Texas counties need these financial resources to better compete with other students. These resources purchase books and supplies. A loss of revenues will make it difficult for schools in rural communities to attract and keep talented teachers.



The Impact of SRSCA Funding on County Roads and Bridges

Counties in Texas that receive SRSCA funding rely heavily upon these funds to maintain county roads and bridges. "In 2008, SRSCA funding represented 25 percent of Houston County's Road and Bridge Budget," according to County Judge Lonnie Hunt. "In some of our other rural counties the percentage is even greater. Property tax is the major source of funding for county government in Texas." With property values having declined by more than 10 percent over the last two years, Hunt says, "We don't have any other way to make up this revenue loss." In 1996, prior to SRSCA, when the U.S. Forest Service was harvesting timber in the Davy Crockett National Forest, Houston County's share of receipts from National Forest Timber Sales was over \$1.4 million.



Judge Lonnie Hunt—
Houston County, TX

SRSCA Value Added through Resource Advisory Committees (RACs)

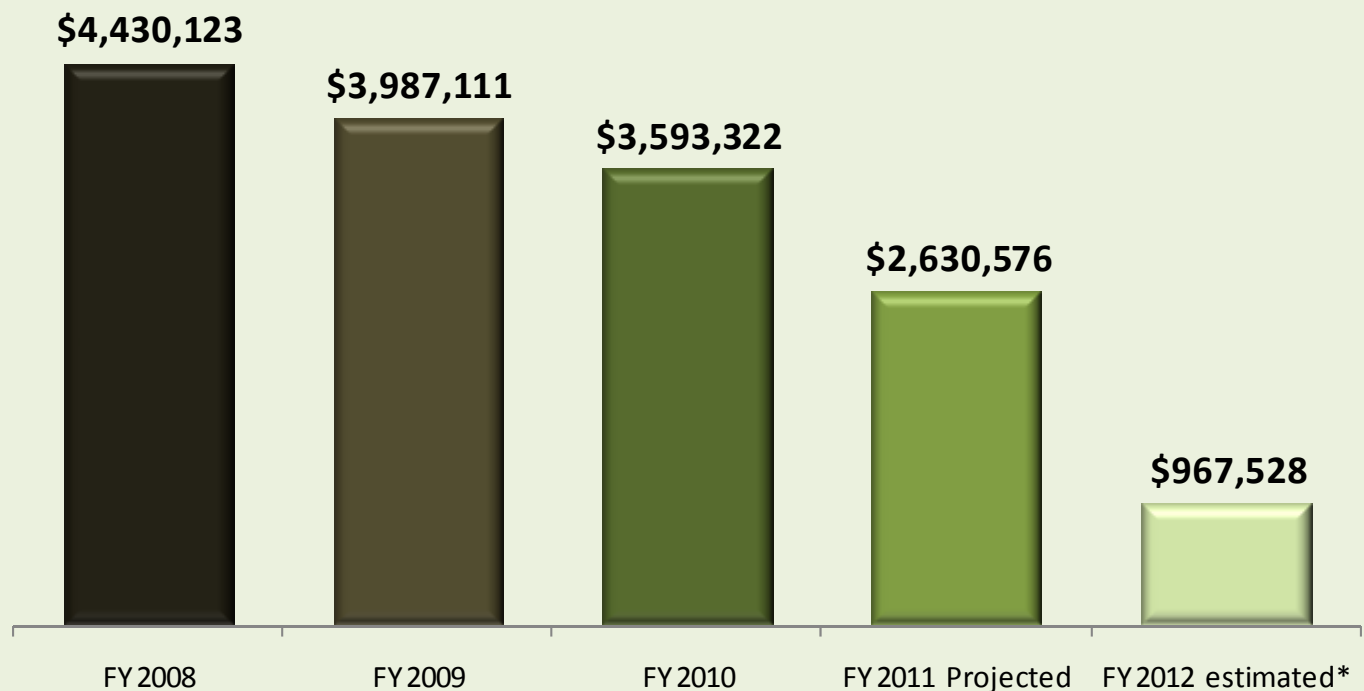
The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act authorized the use of the Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) as a mechanism for local community collaboration with federal land managers in recommending Title II resource-benefit projects on federal lands. In 2008, \$ 337,235 of SRSCA funding was allocated to Resource Advisory Committee activities in Texas to implement forest and ecosystem health projects ranging from forest thinning to road construction projects, providing jobs and contributing to local economies.

SRSCA Payments to Texas by Congressional District 2008 through 2012

Congressional District	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011 Projected	FY 2012 estimated*	Decrease from 2008 to 2012
Louis Gohmert (District 1)	\$1,996,870	\$1,797,183	\$1,619,683	\$1,145,133	\$344,278	-\$1,652,592
Joe Barton (District 6)	\$1,528,948	\$1,376,053	\$1,240,147	\$917,876	\$394,267	-\$1,134,681
Kevin Brady (District 8)	\$904,305	\$813,875	\$733,492	\$567,567	\$228,982	-\$675,323
Total	\$4,430,123	\$3,987,111	\$3,593,322	\$2,630,576	\$967,528	-\$3,462,596

* Source: USDA Forest Service, Estimated county share of 25% payments for FY 2010. When the SRSCA expires at the end of fiscal year 2011, payments to states will be a 25-percent share of a rolling 7-year average annual receipts.

State of Texas: Secure Rural Schools & Community Self-Determination Act Receipts 2008 -2012

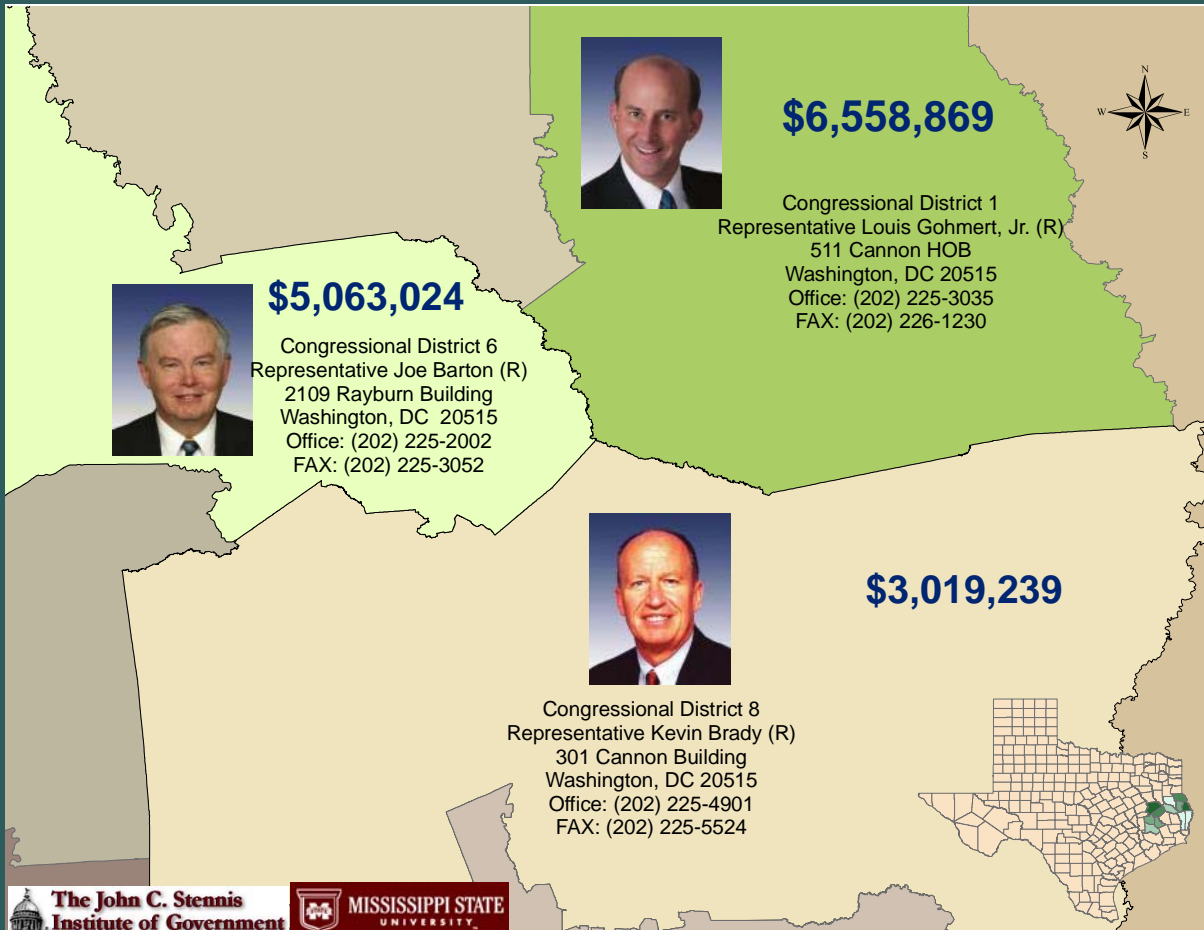


There are approximately 637,745 acres of National Forest land in the state of Texas; the average SRSCA payment per acre was \$5.21 in FY 2010.

Secure Rural Schools & Community Self-Determination Act Funding to Rural Texas Counties and School Districts 2008—2011



Total Funding to Texas: \$ 14,641,133



- Texas received \$4,430,123 in 2008
- This number will fall to \$967,528 in 2012
- This is a loss of over \$3.46 million



Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R)
 284 Russell Senate Office Bldg
 Washington, DC 20510
 Office: (202) 224-5922
 FAX: (202) 224-0776



Senator John Cornyn (R)
 517 Hart Senate Office Bldg
 Washington, DC 20510
 Office: (202) 224-2934
 FAX: (202) 228-2856

TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE NOW

Partnership for Rural America Campaign
 113 Green Oak Cove ~ Clinton, MS 39056
 Joel Yelverton or Marc Kelley Phone: (877) 778-7252
<http://www.partnershipforruralamerica.org>