Dear Editor,

It has recently come to my attention that among the state legislature's cost-cutting proposals is a financial aid program called the Tuition Equalization Grant.

It concerns me that our state is so ready to cut one of our most efficient and vital education programs. If there is a better return on investment from a government program, I have never seen it.

Texas' $102 million annual investment into the TEG represents a miniscule 1% of the state's education budget, but assists students with the greatest financial need to attend the Texas college of their choice. Students who study in Texas usually stay in Texas, keeping our greatest resource home for the benefit of our state.

Forty percent of TEG recipients come from families who can only contribute $1,000 or less per year to college expenses. It's a program that serves many first-generation college students and minorities. Making a cut to such a program would disproportionately punish those in our community who need the most assistance.

The usual TEG award is $3,500. That's less than one-half the average taxpayer contribution to students enrolling at public universities in Texas. Many of these recipients rely on the TEG to attend their private college or university. Cutting their award will force many of them into state colleges and universities, thus potentially doubling the state's financial obligation to its state institutions.

We need to make cuts during this budget crisis, but we must be wise. Cutting the TEG will not save Texas and the taxpayers money. Quite the contrary, it will burden the state further. We need our state leaders to be wise in making these important decisions, and not make a hasty cut just for the sake of making a cut.