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Local Government Transparency Bills Filed So Texas Voters Will Be More In The Know
Senator Bettencourt Files SB 1041 and SB 1042

Austin - Senator Bettencourt filed two bills late Friday to ensure local government transparency. Governor Abbott campaigned on this across the State of Texas, and Senator Bettencourt has now filed legislation to live up to that promise.

Taxpayers deserve to know how much debt they must already pay for before voting on more government debt.

SB 1041 will result in voters being more adequately informed about any new debt they are being asked to approve during local bond elections. This legislation would amend the Texas Election Code to require local bond election ballots – including those effecting cities, counties, school districts, and special taxing districts – required to include the following information:

- the amount of debt currently outstanding,
- current debt service payments,
- current debt obligations,
- the amount of new debt being proposed, and
- estimated per household burden being proposed.

“We need to have clear and concise transparency requirements for the disclosure of debt information to voters in local bond elections. This legislation will mean that voters statewide will be able to confidently cast a more informed vote during these elections,” Senator Bettencourt said.

The second bill, SB 1042, would simply require all local taxing entities to post their financial statements online. A similar provision passed the Senate last Session as part of SB14, which died in the House.

Bettencourt noted, “In the 21st century, every governmental body – federal, state, and local – should be posting this information online. This bill will simply reflect today’s reality.”