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**For Immediate Release**  
October 7, 2015

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**Bettencourt Delivers Letter to Judge in Austin Property Tax Lawsuit**  
*City's Arguments are an Affront to Texas Taxpayers*

**Austin** - Today the City of Austin, having sued the Travis Central Appraisal District, Comptroller Glenn Hegar, and over 11,000 owners of commercial and vacant property in Travis County, is going to court to ask a judge to allow them to block service of process to the property owners that are directly affected by their lawsuit. Not only is the City arguing that property owners are not necessary defendants, but that even if they were, the City should be excused from serving them because doing so would be expensive for the City and serving the affected property owners would only cause "confusion" and "anger."

**"The argument made by the City is an affront to taxpayers," said Senator Bettencourt. "The City wants to keep property owners uninformed about this case and doesn't seem to care about trampling on their rights to do it!"**

The City also asks the court to require sales price disclosure and eliminate remedies available to taxpayers whose property is unequally appraised. The City claims that these statutes make it impossible to appraise properties at market value. However, their position conflicts with the Legislature's intent in crafting these statutes as critical protections *for* taxpayers. Under Article 8, Section 1-b of the Texas Constitution, only the Legislature has the authority to determine how the market value of real property will be appraised. There is no reason for a court to grant the City of Austin the ability to supersede the Legislature's authority.

**"As a Legislator and longtime participant in the property tax system, both as a tax assessor-collector and as a private citizen, I would like to counter that the City's claims are simply false," said Senator Bettencourt. "The fact is that the Legislature has actively rejected the remedies sought by the City of Austin now through judicial activism."**

The City's lawsuit is an abuse of the administrative and judicial property value appeals process which was designed to decide matters of value, not to raise constitutional challenges to the property tax system on a statewide basis. The City has also needlessly included Comptroller Glenn Hegar in their lawsuit, despite knowing that the Comptroller's Office has no direct role in the appraisal process or in enforcing the sections of the Tax Code the City is challenging as unconstitutional. Finally, the City's effort to challenge all commercial property values is overly broad and will affect thousands of property owners who do not even pay taxes to the City of Austin.

**"The taxpayers of Texas would be best served if the court would agree with the motion for summary judgment and dismiss this misguided suit," said Senator Bettencourt.**