

State of Texas  
Texas Senate

P.O. Box 12068  
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711-2068  
(512) 463-0107  
FAX (512) 463-8810



11451 KATY FREEWAY, SUITE 209  
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77079  
(713) 464-0282  
FAX (713) 461-0108

**Paul Bettencourt**  
DISTRICT 7

Paul.Bettencourt@senate.texas.gov

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**Contact Information**

Lauri Saathoff | (512) 463-0107  
Lauri.Saathoff@senate.texas.gov

**Senator Bettencourt Champions Much Needed Property Tax Reform and Relief for Texas Taxpayers  
Lays out SB 2 in committee, stating, “SB 2 is the solution to stop ever-rising property tax bills”**

**AUSTIN** – Dozens of exasperated Texas taxpayers who have seen average property tax bill increase by 33.7 percent in five years are in Austin today to share their stories with the Senate Finance Committee as it considered property tax reform bills, particularly Senate Bill 2 by Senator Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston). The committee opened testimony this morning on SB 2, the Property Tax Reform and Relief Act of 2017, with public testimony welcome this afternoon.

**“The taxpayers of Texas know property taxes are rising too fast and the only question we have to ask is what we are going to do about it!”** said Senator Bettencourt. **“How can homeowners continue to pay 8, 9, 10 percent a year and business owners 15 to 20 percent more each and every year?”** he asked. **“They can’t, and SB 2 is the solution to stop ever-rising property tax bills.”**

Other local officials testified, like Collin County Judge Keith Self, who reaffirmed that Collin County, the sixth largest county in the state, unanimously supports SB 2 and that counties, cities, and special districts could easily manage their growth needs by reducing the rate of property tax bill growth by setting priorities.

Debunking long-repeated claims that SB 2 is a revenue cap, Tarrant County Tax Assessor-Collector Ron Wright stated emphatically, **“This is not a revenue cap just because you call it so. If you put your boots in an oven, they don’t turn into cookies,”** he quipped.

Galveston County Tax-Assessor Cheryl Johnson also testified before the committee, stating, **“The rhetoric surrounding the interference of local control and financial devastation that will result by passage of SB 2 is simply unfounded.”** In a letter she submitted to the committee, she continued, **“When emotions are removed and facts and simple math presented, it is discovered local governments will not be harmed nor will local control be usurped.”**

Austin Councilwoman Ellen Troxclair responded to a pointed question in the hearing by stating, **“Senator, are you advocating no rollback rate limit at all?”** when she was questioned sharply on whether the state should lower the existing rollback rate of 8 percent to 4 percent for local governments. She had just identified SB 2 potentially saving taxpayers \$15 million in the city of Austin alone that could have been refunded last year to city taxpayers.

On the second panel, industry and business leaders provided additional insight to the committee on the impact of rising property tax rates and government growth on capital-intensive industries. The committee heard from Texas Association of Manufacturers President Tony Bennett and Taxpayers Research Association of Texas President Dale Craymer, who stated, **“The tax rate ratification election is the ultimate form of local control.”** The committee also heard from Brett Williams with the Houston Building Owners and Managers Association and Samsung Inc. General Counsel Catherine Morse. The Greater Houston Partnership endorsed SB 2 in a written proclamation. The hearing continues this evening.

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