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Governor Abbott Signs Four Property Tax Reform Bills Passed By Senator Bettencourt

Legislation adds additional transparency and accountability for taxpayers to the property tax system

AUSTIN - Governor Greg Abbott has signed four taxpayer friendly appraisal reform bills to bring added transparency, accountability, and simplicity to the property tax process in Texas. Three bills authored by Senator Bettencourt, SB 731, SB 945, and SB 1286, as well as one bill authored by Representative Jim Murphy (R-Houston) and sponsored in the Senate by Senator Bettencourt will now become law.

"Any day that you can implement common sense reforms to the property tax process that give taxpayers more options, better information, and more clarity in the overall process is a good day," said Senator Bettencourt. "This package of bills represents another step forward as we continue our effort to bring about meaningful property tax reform and relief for all Texas taxpayers."

- SB 731, sponsored in the House by Rep. Bohac, raises the limit from \$3 million to \$5 million for a property owner to appeal an Appraisal Review Board decision through binding arbitration rather than filing a lawsuit.
- SB 945, sponsored in the House by Rep. Murphy, allows a Chief Appraiser in some cases to correct an erroneous denied or cancelled exemption.
- SB 1286, sponsored in the House by Rep. Murphy, requires the Comptroller to establish rules for Central Appraisal Districts and property owners for providing electronic copies of evidence for an ARB hearing, as well as speed up the process on how arbitrators are selected by as much as 30 days.
- HB 2228 by Murphy and Senate Sponsor Bettencourt streamlines the property tax process by changing certain deadlines and making the overall process more efficient.

"If we can make our taxing process easier to understand, easier to administer, and more fair, those are things that I am proud to team up with Senator Bettencourt to achieve," said Representative Jim Murphy (R-Houston).

Governor Abbott has called the Texas Legislature back for a special session that is scheduled to begin on July 18, 2017. One of the overall priorities for the special session identified by the Governor is additional property tax reform and relief, such as what was found in Senate Bill 2, by Bettencourt, which passed the Senate in the regular session but did not receive a vote in the Texas House.

"While we did pass several bills that included useful taxpayer tools and appraisal process protections, Governor Abbott is absolutely correct when he says there is more work to be done," continued Senator Bettencourt. "Property tax bills have been rising must faster than Texans ability to pay them. As appraised values go up, property tax rates should come down. Taxpayers expect to have a vote on this critical issue, and SB 2 is on the call for the Special Session for that exact reason!"

Senate Bill 2 was formulated after almost 50 hours of testimony before the Senate Select Committee on Property Tax Reform & Relief's statewide tour. Senator Bettencourt has pledged to reintroduce legislation similar to Senate Bill 2 when the special session gets underway.

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