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Ordinary Taxpayers Come Out in Force to Support Texas Property Tax Reform
Opposition dramatically outnumbered as taxpayers turnout on a Saturday to tell their stories

AUSTIN – Taxpayers all over Texas turned out to testify in favor of property tax reform and relief today. From a taxpayer in the panhandle who came to say “**let the people vote!**” to a gentleman from Collin County who said, “**trust the people to vote**”, the Senate Committee on Government Reform took public testimony today on Senate Bill 1, and other legislation, regarding property tax reform and relief in Texas.

The testimony has been over two to one in favor of property tax relief with taxpayers and all business associations supporting Senate Bill 1, while a few city and county representatives still opposed the legislation, and several taxpayers said “**it is my money, not the governments!**”

Highlighting the pressing need for property tax reform, Committee Chair Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) opened the hearing with a presentation showing the explosive growth in government over the last ten years, with city, county, and special district tax levies growing at 71%, 82%, and 93% respectively. “**It is time to let the people have a vote on property tax rates,**” Chair Bettencourt noted.

“**Texas has the unfortunate notoriety of being in the top 5 of highest property taxes in the United States,**” continued Chairman Paul Bettencourt. “**What Senate Bill 1 is about is letting Texans have a vote on the growth of government.**” Committee member Senator Van Taylor (R-Plano), who highlighted a stack of over 400 pages of paper of constituents asking for property tax relief added, “**The purpose of government is to protect our God given rights, not to tax us out of our home.**” A moment of levity occurred when Senator Lucio (D-Brownsville) asked Senator Van Taylor if he “**had a letter from his wife in his stack as she is in support of Senate Bill 1.**”

Senate Bill 1 will lower the current rollback rate from 8% to 4% and add an automatic election provision, to be held in November. Additionally, the legislation standardizes property tax protest deadlines, and, due to divergent practices taking place at appraisal districts across the state, creates the Property Tax Administrative Advisory Board in the Comptroller’s office. Sen. Charles Perry (R-Lubbock) added, “**What this does is give voters a voice in the growth of government.**”

Countering erroneous arguments from proponents of the property tax status quo, witnesses such as Dale Craymer, from the Texas Taxpayers and Research Association noted, “**this bill does not infringe local control, it expands local control.**” Tarrant County Tax Assessor Collector Ron Wright added, “**When they talk about local control, they are talking about government control.**”

“**We are talking about setting priorities, just like every Texas family and every Texas business has to do,**” Chairman Bettencourt concluded.

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