

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

For Immediate Release
March 8, 2019

Contact Information
Robert Flanagan | (713) 464-0282
Robert.Flanagan@senate.texas.gov

Senator Bettencourt Files SB 5, Bipartisan Legislation to Increase the Homestead Exemption to \$35,000
*Legislation increases permanent exemption by \$10,000 so taxpayers benefit for as long as they own the home
Constitutional amendment would let Texas voters give final approval to exemption and funding mechanism*

AUSTIN - Senator Bettencourt (R-Houston) has filed Senate Bill 5, a top priority of Lt. Governor Dan Patrick (R-Texas) with a broad group of bipartisan joint-authors, to increase the state mandated homestead exemption for independent school districts from \$25,000 to \$35,000. Depending on their particular ISD's debt rate, the bill would save the average Texas homeowner roughly \$125. The state last increased the homestead exemption during the 2015 legislative session. SB 5 is joint-authored by Senators Creighton (R-Conroe), Flores (R-Pleasanton), Hall (R-Edgewood), Hancock (R-North Richland Hills), Hinojosa (D-McAllen), Menendez (D-San Antonio), and West (D-Dallas). **"5.37 million Texas homeowners are eligible for relief under SB 5,"** stated Senate Committee on Property Tax Chairman Paul Bettencourt. **"I've got a strong group of bipartisan joint-authors to hear from next."** Senate Bill 5 has joint resolution companion, SJR 71, that takes the issue to the voters for approval in November.

Senator Pete Flores, **"This will help the homeowners of Texas keep their little piece of the Texas sky."**

The Texas Legislature last increased the homestead exemption during the 2015 Legislative Session when they raised it from \$15,000 to \$25,000. This increase will be funded through a mechanism established by SJR 71.

"My constituents have requested relief on their property taxes and increasing the homeowners exemption is a most equitable way to deliver the relief," added Senator Jose Menéndez.

Property taxes have been rising across the state at a much faster rate than Texans ability to pay. A look at property tax levy growth across the major counties in Texas between 2013 - 2017 shows that Harris County had a 51% increase, Bexar County had a 37% increase, Dallas County saw a 33% increase and both Tarrant and Travis counties had roughly an 18% increase. An average homeowner in Houston has seen their tax bill increase 37% over this time frame while in Dallas an average homeowner now pays over \$5,000 every year in property taxes.

"Everyone knows that property tax bills are rising too quickly around the State," added Senator Bettencourt, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Property Tax. **"Increasing the homestead exemption is another step by the Texas Legislature, as part of an overall package which includes Senate Bill 2, that will bring meaningful property tax reform and relief for Texas taxpayers."**

In addition to serving as the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Property Tax Senator Bettencourt also sits on the Senate Finance, Senate Education, and Senate Higher Education Committees. He serves as Chairman of the Texas Senate Republican Caucus. This is the final piece of Senator Bettencourt's major legislation for the 86th Legislative Session.

###