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On "Tax Day" 2019, Senate Passes Property Tax Reform & Relief, SB2 By Bettencourt
Property Tax Reform and Relief Passes to 3rd Reading in Texas Senate
First major property reform bill to pass in 40 years

Austin - The Texas Senate, under the leadership of Lt. Governor Dan Patrick (R-Texas), took a strong stand for Texas taxpayers by passing Senate Bill 2 (authored by Senator Bettencourt (R-Houston)), the Texas Property Tax Reform and Relief Bill of 2019 to 3rd reading. All 19 Republicans voted to bring the bill to the floor, after Lt. Governor Patrick inclined he would use existing rules to move blocker bills for SB2 to be heard.

In a weekend statement showing his resolve on the issue, Lt. Governor Patrick stated, **"I respect our Senate rules, but I do not intend to let a procedural motion stop the Senate from passing this important bill. The public doesn't care about our procedural rules. They want tax relief and they deserve it. Time is running out on our session."** After 19 Republicans voted to allow the bill to be heard, one joined all 12 Democrats in voting no on SB2. **"Its been 38 years since the rollback rate has been dropped and todays the day."** said Senator Bettencourt.

As passed, Senate Bill 2 will establish a new rollback rate for Cities, Counties, and Special Districts of 3.5% and school districts will have a 2.5% rollback rate. A taxing jurisdiction would be required to get voter approval in an automatic November election to go over this rollback rate. The current roll back rate stands at 8% and has remained unchanged since 1981, despite dramatic changes to the inflation rate. In debate on the floor, Senator Kelly Hancock (R-North Richland Hills) noted that the original Senator author of raising the rollback rate to 8% in 1981 noted this *"triggering mechanism"* should be revisited as inflation rates changed. Another amendment by Senator Watson (D-Austin) which sought to remove schools from the bill was defeated. **"School property tax relief must be part of any reform,"** said Senator Bettencourt.

"Taxpayers in Dallas have been crushed with an average 55% increase on their property tax bills in just five years, with a 15% increase in just this year," said Senator Bettencourt. **"With this pattern repeating all across the State, Texas taxpayers know that this must be addressed now."**

Several amendments were offered during the floor debate, such as an amendment added by Senator Flores (R-Pleasanton) which would give taxing jurisdictions credit for indigent defense costs. In one notable exchange, Senator Beverly Powell (D-Burleson) read a letter from the Mayor of Fort Worth noting that if SB2 were passed, the City would face a \$4 million shortfall. Senator Bettencourt highlighted that Fort Worth has raised their levy by over \$113 million in just the last four years. **"This is where my teddy bear becomes a grizzly bear...not at you, but at the information you have been provided, because it is just false,"** he added. **"Four million dollars is 0.2% of the budget and a miniscule fraction of the City of Fort Worth property tax increases. I cant exempt property taxpayers pocket books, so no more government ones!"**

"The beating heart of Senate Bill 2 is 'let the people vote'. Taxpayers cannot take it anymore. Property taxes are increasing two to three times faster than their ability to pay. We must do this not just for the Texans who are, but also for the Texans that will be, so they can own a home and so they can own a business. We are doing this to keep the Texas dream alive," concluded Senator Bettencourt.

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