



SENATOR PAUL BETTENCOURT
DISTRICT 7

March 11, 2019

Re: Correction/Clarification Request

Dear Editor Riley,

Yesterday, in print, a March 9 story by reporter Zach Despart titled "With rev cap looming, Garcia eyes constables' contract deputy program for possible savings" has left readers with an erroneous impression of the facts surrounding the legislative changes under my legislation, Senate Bill 2. I request an immediate correction or clarification to this article to ensure that Chronicle readers have an accurate representation of the facts about this important issue.

First, the Harris County Contract Deputy Program is not funded with county property tax revenue dollars, and is not even subject to the lower rollback limits or the truth in taxation calculations in SB 2. These contracts are paid for by the various neighborhoods, or contracting entity, and are the result of a choice that the collective community has made for additional law enforcement protection. Therefore, Commissioner Garcia's statement and the stories title, and mantra are totally wrong. His statement of "Faced with the financial reality, Garcia said law enforcement is the logical place to look for efficiencies" is so preposterous because it is not financial reality that the Contract Deputy Program has anything to do with property tax revenue collections.

Second, Senate Bill 2 is not a revenue cap, and as stated these are not property tax revenues anyway. Senate Bill 2 lowered the existing rollback rate from 8% down to 3.5% and requires a vote of the public in November if a taxing entity wants to exceed this rollback rate. Commissioner Garcia, and Harris County Commissioner's Court, could hold a November vote to raise additional property tax revenue if they vote to exceed the voter approved rate in the fall.

This article unfortunately leaves the reader completely misinformed about actual events in property taxation and to leave it without a correction or clarification of facts is a disservice to the public. I respectfully ask that you make an immediate clarification or correction to this article about Senate Bill 2 and the facts surrounding how the Harris County Contract Deputy program actually works.

The public overwhelmingly supported the Contract Deputy Program yesterday at Commissioner's Court because it does make the public safer, and it is already funded too!

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul Bettencourt".

Senator Paul Bettencourt

CAPITOL OFFICE
P.O. BOX 12068
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711-2068
(512) 463-0107
FAX: (512) 463-8810

COMMITTEES:
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PROPERTY TAX - CHAIR
EDUCATION
FINANCE
HIGHER EDUCATION

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