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DONNA CAMPBELL, MD
DISTRICT 25

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VIA Board to be Elected by Voters Under Sen. Campbell Bill

AUSTIN-- On the first day of pre-filing for the 84th Legislature, State Senator Donna Campbell filed legislation to hold VIA Board members accountable to the voters, changing membership from an appointed position to an elected position.

"Anytime a board oversees hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars - in this case to improve transportation mobility in the Greater San Antonio area - those individuals need to be held accountable for their actions," Senator Campbell said. "What we have now in regards to overseeing ATD dollars is taxation without representation. This bill will change that and ensure our tax dollars are spent as efficiently as possible on projects that benefit the greatest number of people."

Under current law, VIA Board members serve two year terms after being appointed by either the San Antonio City Council, the Bexar County Commissioners Court, or the Suburban Mayors. Under Senator Campbell's bill, SB 119, all of the positions will be elected to serve a staggered term of two years, with no one serving more than eight years.

The proposed bill comes after a summer in which Senator Campbell and State Representative Lyle Larson wrote letters to VIA and TxDOT trying to get \$93 million from the cancelled streetcar project put towards improving U.S. Highway 281 and Loop 1604. However, VIA chose to hang onto the funds anyway even without the streetcar.

"My concern is that government is always accountable to the people. What I have heard from Bexar County residents, many who commute hours every day in traffic, is that their voice has been neglected despite paying extra sales tax for improved roads," Senator Campbell added. "An elected board will be more responsive to the needs of the citizens. It's the morally and fiscally responsible thing to do."

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Senator Donna Campbell is a practicing emergency room physician representing Senate District 25, which includes all or parts of Bexar, Comal, Guadalupe, Hays, Kendall, and Travis Counties.