



## DON HUFFINES

STATE SENATOR • DISTRICT 16

As a father of five, I understand that we want our children to be happy, healthy, and to have good character. We also want them to get a great education and grow up to be successful, productive, and virtuous adults. That is why, as your state Senator, I have made education one of my top legislative priorities.

Texas was in a repetitive and self-defeating battle over school finance for thirty years. The Supreme Court of Texas told the Legislature numerous times that a funding system based on local property taxes was unequal and unconstitutional. It was an attempt to fix that fundamentally broken system that brought us the Robin Hood program, which takes millions of dollars a year from certain “property-wealthy” school districts and redistributes them to “property-poor” districts.

Every year, school districts in Senate District 16 - chiefly Highland Park and Coppell ISDs - lose many millions of dollars in locally-generated tax revenue to this program. For example, Highland Park ISD paid \$75.2 million back to the state in recapture payments for the 2014-2015 school year. That payment exceeded the district’s other operating expenditures by \$16.3 million. Although handcuffed with this enormous payment, Highland Park students nonetheless excelled with almost 100 percent of the 2014 graduating class going on to pursue higher education, shattering the state average of 54.2 percent. HP ISD is not only the best ISD in Texas but one of the best in the USA!

During the 84th Legislative session I filed two bills to alleviate some of the financial burden Robin Hood places on “property-wealthy” school districts. Senate Bill 1186 would have allowed these districts to earn a deduction on Robin Hood payments if they achieved a combination of academic success and efficient spending. Senate Bill 1610 would have frozen districts’ Robin Hood payments, stopping year-to-year increases and allowing them to keep some money that would otherwise be taken out of the district.

As long as the Robin Hood program exists I will continue to work hard to fix or repeal it, and I am optimistic that the time for real change is finally here. While the Supreme Court of Texas held our school finance system to be constitutional, it made clear that our system is antiquated and our students deserve top-to-bottom reform. 2017 presents the perfect opportunity for significant reforms and limitations to the Robin Hood program (if not its outright elimination). The type of school finance system I want for Texas children is one where your tax dollars follow your children and you have a voice in their education. A robust parental empowerment school choice program for all Texans will strengthen and improve all public schools in Texas. This is what our children deserve, and I will work tirelessly to make it a reality.

As your state Senator, it is my job to be your representative in Austin. I work for you, so please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my Dallas office at (214) 239-6131 or my Capitol office at (512) 463-0116.

In Liberty and Your Employee,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Don Huffines".

Don Huffines  
Senate District 16

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## About Don Huffines:



As a fifth generation Texan, my family has a strong legacy of hard work and faith in God. My wife of 28 years, Mary Catherine, and I have raised four sons and one daughter. My family started out in Texas as farmers, working the land by hand. In 1924, my grandfather started an automobile business which he built into a company that my family still owns and operates to this day. My business, Huffines Communities, is one of the largest real-estate land developers in the Dallas/Fort Worth region. My family and I are proud to have rooted ourselves in the Dallas area.

### HIGHLAND PARK ISD RECAPTURE/ ROBIN HOOD PAYMENT HISTORY

SCHOOL YEAR	TOTAL RECAPTURE PAYMENT	PERCENTAGE M&O TAXES SUBJECT TO RECAPTURE
2006-07	\$78,300,213	72%
2007-08	\$64,599,594	70%
2008-09	\$71,988,604	72%
2009-10	\$72,471,625	70%
2010-11	\$70,985,369	70%
2011-12	\$68,999,544	69%
2012-13	\$68,513,416	68%
2013-14	\$68,951,599	65%
2014-15	\$75,193,548	66%

Highland Park ISD (District #57911) Recapture/Robin Hood Payment History between School Year 2006-07 and 2014-15

***“To fully experience liberty, we must have a virtuous society. Instead of turning to government for answers or solutions, I believe in you and the power of the individual to solve most of our issues. By working together, everything is possible. Texas’ greatest days are yet to dawn. Our future is limitless. God bless Texas.”***

***– Senator Don Huffines***