



SENATOR PAUL BETTENCOURT

DISTRICT 7

For Immediate Release
Thursday, Sept. 15, 2016

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BETTENCOURT LAUDS TAXPAYER LAWSUIT TO RECLAIM VOTER-APPROVED HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION

AUSTIN – A taxpayer in the Texas Panhandle today filed a lawsuit against White Deer ISD, one of 21 school districts that decided to reduce or repeal their local option homestead exemptions (LOHE). These LOHEs were frozen by Senate Bill 1, authored by Sen. Jane Nelson (R-Flower Mound), as passed during the last legislative session, which provided an additional \$10,000 homestead exemption, and voters approved the constitutional provision in a statewide election.

“I laud the taxpayer who stepped forward to demand that the local option homestead exemption be restored on one of these 21 school districts,” said Sen. Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston). **“Instead of getting the promised \$129 in tax relief, these taxpayers saw their potential relief wiped out by misguided local trustees’ action against the clear intent of the Legislature and the voters.”**

The Texas Attorney General’s Office told the Senate Finance Committee in this morning’s hearing that the Attorney General’s Office had intervened in the lawsuit on the side of the taxpayer.

“Thankfully, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton recognizes that when the State of Texas passes a law and makes a promise to taxpayers, the right thing to do is to stand with Texas taxpayers that should have gotten the additional homestead exemption that was passed by the voters. I call on the trustees of these 21 ISDs to reverse their wrongheaded decision and restore their local option homestead exemption before ordered to do so by a court of law,” Sen. Bettencourt added.

SB 1 by Sen. Nelson was the first step in property tax relief that was passed during the last legislative session. Another bill, SB 1760, authored by Sen. Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe) and amended by Sen. Bettencourt, recently saved Dallas ISD taxpayers from a \$100 million property tax increase on top of a 12.2 percent appraisal value increase by requiring a super-majority, 6-3 vote to enact a tax rate ratification election. Dallas ISD was only able to secure five votes in favor of the proposed property tax increase motion.

The Senate Select Committee on Property Tax Reform and Relief as appointed by Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick will be releasing its interim report this fall following a statewide tour of public hearings to listen to input from citizens across the State of Texas. Property tax reform and relief is one of the lieutenant governor’s top legislative priorities in the upcoming session.

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