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## **Texas Senate Champions Real Property Tax Relief: Adds SB 2's Property Tax Rollback and Automatic Election Provisions as Amendment to Counties' Omnibus Bill**

Austin – The Texas Senate early this morning passed the property tax rollback and automatic election provisions of Senate Bill 2, the Property Tax Reform and Relief Act by Senator Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston), as an amendment to House Bill 4180 authored by House County Affairs Committee Chair Garnet Coleman (D-Houston). The Senate approved HB 4180 as amended on a bipartisan vote of 20-11, higher than the original 18-12 vote March 21.

**“Texas taxpayers know the truth: Property taxes are rising too fast,”** Senator Bettencourt said. **“Senate Bill 2 was based upon 50 hours of public testimony from taxpayers around the state that show multiple years of double digit increases in property tax bills on homes and businesses. The rollback rate and automatic election provisions amendment passed by the Senate early this morning will save future money for hard-pressed homeowners and business owners. That’s real property tax relief, and the higher vote says it is continuing to catch on!”**

Key provisions of SB 2 that were amended to HB 4180 include:

- Lowering the rollback rate from 8 percent to 5 percent;
- Scheduling an automatic election if a taxing jurisdiction exceeds the 5 percent rate; and
- Bringing transparency and simplification to the property tax appraisal process in Texas.

Polling shows that a vast majority of Texans of all political persuasions agree on the need for property tax reform and relief. Data from the Texas Politics Project at the University of Texas at Austin in 2015 showed an overall 84% support for reducing property taxes. This included 92% of Republicans, 74% of Democrats, and 80% of Independents.

Additionally, data showed widespread support for limiting the extent to which local governments can raise their property taxes, a concept similar to the rollback idea that the Texas Senate passed in their version of SB 2. 77% of overall voters supported that idea, with 88% of Republicans, 64% of Democrats, and 76% of Independents backing the proposal.

**“An 8 percent rollback rate is out of date in our current period of low inflation,”** said Senator Bettencourt. The 5 percent rollback rate reduction included in HB 4180 early this morning is consistent with the version of SB 2 that was originally approved by the Texas Senate as well as the original Texas property tax law written in 1979.

**“Lowering the rollback rate back down to 5 percent as it was in the original law is a common-sense decision to bring property taxes in line with current economic conditions. Increasing the bipartisan vote early this morning for SB 2 was telling, and to be a part of 48 really good pieces of legislation was a fabulous way to start the day!”** Senator Bettencourt concluded.

The bill now returns to the House for either concurrence or conference.

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