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Senator Bettencourt Files Special Session Property Tax Reform & Relief Legislation

*Lt. Governor Patrick creates Senate Select Committee on Government Reform to hear Property Tax Legislation
Governor Greg Abbott calls Property Tax Reform & Relief his top priority of the Special Session*

AUSTIN - Responding to overwhelming support for property tax reform and relief, Senator Bettencourt filed Senate Bill 1, which was joint authored by Senators Creighton, Hancock, and V. Taylor, for the special session of the 85th Texas Legislature. SB1 incorporates many of the proposals from SB2, the Texas Property Tax Reform & Relief Act of 2017, that was passed twice by the Senate during the regular session, but was not voted on in the House.

Today, Lt. Governor Patrick created the Senate Select Committee on Government Reform and named Senator Bettencourt as the Chairman. The committee will be hearing Senate Bill 1, as well as any other bills referred to the committee by the Lt. Governor. Committee members are Senators Bettencourt, Creighton, Hancock, Lucio, Perry, Uresti, and Van Taylor. Lt. Governor Patrick selected the same members that heard almost 50 hours of public testimony regarding property taxes in 2016 as part of last session's property tax relief efforts.

Citing rising property tax bills as his number one priority for the special session, Governor Abbott stated, **"We are hearing stories about people who are being taxed out of their homes because of rising property taxes. You don't really own your home, it seems like, it's the appraisers. That must stop."**

In major metropolitan areas throughout Texas, property tax bills have been growing at a rapid pace. In Harris County for example, over three years, property tax bills for the county portion of the tax bill have increased over 36% and the City of Houston portion has increased almost 25%. A similar trend can be seen in Dallas with average county tax bills up over 25% and city tax bills up over 20% in just three years. Notably, Travis County, which saw a 28% increase in the average home's taxable value over a three year period held the county portion of average property tax bills flat by cutting the property tax rate by 12 pennies.

"Taxpayers know the truth: Property tax bills are rising too quickly," said Senator Paul Bettencourt.

"Taxpayers in major metropolitan areas throughout Texas are seeing their property tax bills increase 2 1/3 times faster than their than income. This is unsustainable and must be changed. As appraised values go up across the state, Senate Bill 1 will give voters a say in bringing down their property tax bills."

Senate Bill 1 will lower the current rollback provision for cities, counties, and special district taxing entities from 8% to 4%. It will also include an automatic election provision, to be held in November, if a taxing entity exceeds that amount, bringing those taxing entities under the same system that school districts currently operate under. Senate Bill 1 also will create a \$10 million exclusion so that taxing entities that collect less than that amount will be exempt from these requirements. Based on the most recent Comptroller data, that means approximately 116 cities and 120 counties throughout Texas would be subject to the legislation.

"Texans deserve a vote on the property tax reform and relief rollback provisions in Senate Bill 1," continued Senator Bettencourt. **"I fully support Governor Abbott and Lt. Governor Patrick for making property tax relief a top priority and I look forward to the Legislature passing meaningful property tax reform and relief for all Texas home and business owners during this special session."**

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