



# Pete's Periódico

## *Property Tax Relief is on the Way*

by Sen. Pete Flores, Senate District 19

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While listening to constituents from all parts of Senate District 19—rural and urban, Republican and Democrat—there is one shared issue that emerges: ever-increasing property taxes. Folks told me to "go to Austin and do something." Well, we did something.

The Texas Senate passed the Texas Property Tax Reform and Relief Act of 2019; a landmark property tax bill which lowers the rollback rate (the threshold at which an election for voter-approval is automatically triggered). I described this bill (Senate Bill 2) in detail in my Periódico in late February.

Currently, the rollback rate is 8%: meaning cities, counties, and other jurisdictions can increase taxes without voter approval up to 8% a year. Senate Bill 2, as originally proposed, changed that rate to 2.5%. The rate was amended to 3.5% in the final bill that passed the Senate.

To better assist the counties of across my district, I added a floor amendment that covers the unpredictable cost of indigent criminal defense. As criminal trials are impossible to predict, one long trial can cost a rural county an extreme amount of money. Taking this into account, my amendment allows counties to recuperate financially from a prolonged trial with a special adjusted tax rate the following year.

Texans across this state are being taxed out of their home. This property tax legislation seeks to halt that trend. This issue was a top priority for myself, Gov. Greg Abbott, and Lt. Governor Dan Patrick. I am proud the Texas Senate is one step close to property tax relief for all Texans.

The Texas Senate also passed Senate Bill 23, the Born Alive Protection Act. The bill protects the lives of babies, creating a felony offense for any physician who fails to treat a baby who survive an abortion. I was a strong supporter of this bill when it came through Health and Human Services Committee and again when it was heard on the Senate Floor. Our society is based on how we treat our most defenseless citizens. The measure of Texas is shown by this bill.

In other news, the Del Rio High School Mariachi Band was in the Capitol recently. This talented group of kids won the UIL 6A State Mariachi Festival earlier this spring—they are so good I invited them to come up to Austin and play in the Capitol Rotunda.

The band played for about 45 minutes in the middle of the Capitol, captivating hundreds of visitors with the sounds of vihuelas and trumpets. I recorded part of their performance and posted on our Facebook page; the band went internet viral with over 67,00 video views and reaching almost 150,000 people across Texas. It was a privilege to have them visit.

As you are reading this, the days left in the 86th Legislative Session is slipping down below 40; we are on the home stretch. The recent Easter and San Jacinto Day holidays was the last true break until end of May.

In addition to the bills described above, I am the primary author or coauthor of another 28 Senate Bills that have passed the Texas Senate; overall, over 430 bills have passed. Needless to say, life has been hectic here in Austin.

Continue to call and email my office with your opinions on bills and other issues. You are my boss. Adelante!

*Sen. Pete Flores is a Republican Texas Senator representing Senate District 19.*

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