



Pete's Periódico

Protecting Texas Taxpayers

by Sen. Pete Flores, Senate District 19

May 6, 2019

The final month of the 86th Legislature is here: with an end date of May 27, we have less than three weeks remaining. Property tax reform and school finance remain top topics of discussion, something that is hardly news to loyal readers. I am happy to report these discussions have turned into legislative action.

The Senate version of the Texas Property Tax Reform and Relief Act of 2019 passed last month; the House passed its version last week. It now remains for the two chambers to agree on a final product. As Lt. Governor Dan Patrick put it at a recent press conference with the Governor and Speaker of the House, the Legislature is at the "5-yard line" with property tax reform. All that is left is one final push, scoring property tax relief for all Texans.

School finance, an issue interdependent with property taxes, remains the other large issue waiting on conclusion. As of writing, the Senate is slated to take up committee substitute House Bill 3, the school finance reform bill. The issue is immensely complex—featuring 250+ pages and 100+ potential amendments—and would require a few columns to truly describe in detail. Understand this: the process by which our schools are funded is unbalanced and outdated. It is our intention with this bill to revolutionize school finance, successfully fulfilling our constitutional duty to establish an "efficient system of public free schools."

In other legislative news, it has come to my attention that while purchasing a motor vehicle and the dealership goes out of business, the title of the car can go under with the car dealership. This leaves customers caught in the middle, driving a car without true title ownership.

My bill seeks to fix this issue by giving customers a remedy when wronged, allowing customers to appeal to the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles for their vehicle title. With adequate proof, these customers would be able to rightfully "claim" their car. It also seeks to increase the minimum required surety bond, providing further insurance of a solvent dealership. This bill received unanimous support in the Senate; it now remains to be heard in the House.

One of my bills has gone through the entire legislative process—the first to do so. Senate Bill 225 was the third bill I filed and is now on its way to the Governor's desk to be signed into law. As discussed in a previous Periódico, the bill creates a new military license plates for veterans who have received the Army Occupation Medal. A simple recognition from the state, but the least we can do for those brave men who performed occupation service in Japan, Germany, Italy, and Austria in the aftermath of World War II.

I am a coauthor on a bill with Sen. Judith Zaffirini that helps protect licensed professionals such as teachers, nurses, attorneys, and others ability to work. Under current law, these professional can be denied license application, renewal, or face absolute suspension if they have defaulted on their student loans.

I understand loans can be hard to pay and fully agree consequences should follow those who fail to pay. But it's a dark irony when professionals attend years of school, and subsequent mounds of debt, to then suffer a loan default and are unable to continue working as a result. There is no sense in not allowing professionals to work, earn an income, and further pay for the very degree that that are in debt for. This does not help workers, the industries, or Texas as a whole.

Next time you read this Periódico, we will be in the last week of the 86th Legislature. My daily goal this session was to fight for the people of Senate District 19. It is an honor to do so. Adelante!

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

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