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Flores and Shine File Legislation to Deliver Property Tax Relief

Flores Files First Bill During 88th Legislative Session

AUSTIN, TEXAS - Today, Texas State Senator Pete Flores (SD-24) filed his first bill in the 88th Legislative Session, Senate Bill 748 which will make State funds available to local governments to offset the cost of property tax exemptions on residence homesteads for 100 percent or completely disabled military veterans. This legislation will deliver much-needed relief to taxpayers and is a companion bill to House Bill 1613 filed by State Representative Hugh Shine (HD-55). They release the following statements:

"Every day, more people and companies are moving to the Lone Star State which has made the need for meaningful property tax relief even more important," said Senator Flores. **"I introduced Senate Bill 748 to ensure our communities have access to tangible resources and aid as they continue to navigate the growth. This legislation will make State funds available to local governments to support the cities and counties that aren't home to or near a military installation and put more money back into the pockets of taxpayers. The disabled veteran exemption is a phenomenal opportunity for our State to honor the sacrifices of our military veterans. As a strong supporter of our military men and women, it is a great honor to represent not only Fort Hood, but also the neighboring areas that are home to thousands of veterans that have so valiantly served our country and protected our freedoms."**

"Texas military communities become home to retiring and separated service members, who selected Texas as their home of record during their period of service," Shine stated. **"Texas is one of six states without a state income tax, has an extensive veteran hospital and clinic network around the state, and an attractive economic environment making our State a top choice for retirement,"** said Shine.

"My office assembled a policy team a year ago to study this issue and develop a policy initiative that would completely reimagine the State of Texas' response to the disproportionately impacted communities surrounding military installations that the 100 percent disabled veteran exemption has created," said Shine. **"I am delighted that Senator Flores has agreed to join me in resolving this issue by filing the Senate companion of House Bill 1613. It is an honor to represent communities that are home to so many service men and women, and HB 1613 will ensure that these disproportionately impacted communities are able to provide the quality of life that our veterans deserve."**

Background:

In Texas, veterans are living further from military installations due to increased cost of living, proximity to family, and a variety of other reasons. Currently, only counties that partially or wholly contain a military installation and cities adjacent to installations receive state reimbursement funds to offset the cost of lost revenue due to the disabled veteran property tax exemption. Often, local taxpayers are then required to make up the difference in revenue with increased taxes.

Because of the revenue gaps seen in surrounding areas not currently receiving state aid, Texas' military installations could be at risk for unfavorable base realignment and closure (BRAC) decisions. On-going evaluations take into consideration the community's ability to provide adequate public services, employment, and quality of life. With the gaps in revenue, certain communities may be at a disadvantage with lesser services available.

SB 748 and HB 1613 aim to fix this by expanding access to the state aid to all Texas cities and counties, creating fair access and removing that financial burden from the pocketbook of taxpayers.