

Texas Senate
Select Committee on Property Tax
Reform and Relief



Senator Paul Bettencourt, Chair
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Select Committee on Property Tax Reform and Relief Sees Strong Turnout at Lubbock Hearing
Committee hears almost five hours of testimony highlighting rapid growth in property tax levies

Lubbock –The Senate Select Committee on Property Tax Reform and Relief heard almost five hours of invited, resource, and public testimony regarding property tax reform and relief and the appraisal process in Texas. Chair Paul Bettencourt (SD-7), committee members Brandon Creighton (SD-4), Van Taylor (SD-8), Kelly Hancock (SD-9), Carlos Uresti (SD-19), and Charles Perry (SD-28) were in attendance to hear from Texans who drove for up to six hours to address the committee.

" Taxpayers simply cannot continue to withstand tax bills that increase over three times as fast as their income," said Chairman Bettencourt. **"There is not a wage earner out there that would turn down a 10% wage increase every year, but that is exactly the deal that government has in many areas"**

Comptroller office data shows that between 2005 and 2014, in Lubbock County, property tax levies have increased 105%, while median household income has increased only 32% over this same time period. Statewide in the same time period, property taxes are rising 2.5 times faster than median household income. During the testimony, Paul Harpole, Mayor of Amarillo, disputed the Comptroller's numbers as incorrect and misleading. Senator Hancock (SD-9) however highlighted that, **"The Comptroller gets their numbers from the local taxing entities."**

Committee members heard from several local officials and had a robust discussion about the potential for lowering the rollback rate to population growth plus inflation. Local officials argued that they should have local control when determining how best to govern. In response, Senator Van Taylor (SD-8) commented, **"A rollback election is giving power to the voters, isn't that the ultimate form of local control?"** He further noted that, **"The current appraisal system has put us on auto pilot for growing government."**

Particularly noteworthy was public testimony given by a man that drove six hours just to address the committee. During his testimony it was stated that his property tax bill had increased 25% in just a single year. It was highlighted that during his protest hearing the Appraisal Review Board Chairman asked the County's Chief Appraiser what could be done, because they were not supposed to make any changes. These two entities are supposed to operate independently of other another.

"This is exactly why Lt. Governor Dan Patrick commissioned this committee to go around the State," said Chairman Bettencourt. **"Actions like this are appalling to Texas taxpayers and make a mockery of the entire system."**

The committee heard invited testimony from Tim Radloff , Lubbock County Chief Appraiser, Ronnie Keister, Lubbock County Tax Assessor Collector, and Paul Harpole, Mayor of Amarillo.

The Select Committee on Property Tax Reform and Relief will continue to hold hearings throughout Texas in the coming months. The next hearing will be held on April 27 at the University of Texas at Arlington.

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Members

Brandon Creighton
Eddie Lucio, Jr.
Van Taylor

Kelly Hancock
Charles Perry
Carlos Uresti