

State of Texas
Texas Senate

PO Box 12068
Austin, Texas 7871-2068
512-463-0107
512-463-8810 Fax



11451 Katy Freeway, Suite 209
Houston, Texas 77079
(713) 464-0282
(713) 461-0108 - fax

Paul Bettencourt
DISTRICT 7

Paul.Bettencourt@senate.state.tx.us

For Immediate Release:
Monday, June 20, 2016

Contact Information:
VA Stephens
(512) 463-0107

Senator Bettencourt Busts Common Property Tax Myths: Renters Do Not Have a Free Lunch
In Harris County, apartment values have grown three times faster than single family residences

HOUSTON – Senator Paul Bettencourt, Texas State Senator for District 7, today announced that he will be "myth busting" a series of common property tax myths over the coming weeks. During statewide testimony in front of the Senate Select Committee on Property Tax Reform and Relief, which is chaired by Sen. Bettencourt, pro-tax groups repeated several myths that are not supported by empirical data. The first property tax myth Sen. Bettencourt will address is that renters are not impacted by rising appraisals and increasing property taxes.

"The myth that apartment renters get a free lunch on paying property taxes does not add up," Sen. Bettencourt said. **"The data is clear: In Harris County, the average taxable value on multifamily housing units has increased three times faster than the average taxable value increase on single family homes, and more than four times faster than median household income in Harris County. Rather than getting a free lunch, renters get eaten for lunch by property taxes."**

In Harris County the average taxable value for multifamily housing has increased 138 percent since 2005. Over the same time period, the average taxable value on a single family home has increased 46 percent, and median household income has increased 31 percent. Given testimony by retiring Harris County Chief Appraiser Sands Stiefer that the average residential home increase last year was 28.6 percent, these numbers are expected to increase dramatically as data is fully reported.

Sen. Bettencourt continued: **"The first time anyone heard about this dramatic increase was during our committee hearing. Even with a guesstimated 7.5 percent increase this year, that brings the two-year appraised value increase to 38 percent in Harris County. The only thing that slowed the increase on homeowners was the 10 percent per year appraisal cap which is spreading out these increases over multiple years. Single family homes are catching up rapidly."**

Sen. Bettencourt is the chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Property Tax Reform and Relief. The committee has held hearings throughout Texas to study the property tax process, including the appraisal system, and recommend ways to promote transparency, simplicity, and accountability by all taxing entities, and examine and develop options to further reduce the tax burden on property owners.

The committee plans to hold additional hearings this fall and release its legislative report later this year.

###