

Texas Senate
Select Committee on Property Tax
Reform and Relief



Senator Paul Bettencourt, Chair
512-463-0107

For Immediate Release:
April 27, 2016

Contact: VA Stephens
512-463-0107

Lt. Governor Dan Patrick Addresses Select Committee on Property Tax Reform and Relief in Arlington
Public informed of 12-13% increase for average Dallas County homes for first time during testimony

Arlington – The Senate Select Committee on Property Tax Reform and Relief was joined by Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick today during their hearing at the University of Texas at Arlington. Chair Paul Bettencourt (SD-7), committee members Senator Brandon Creighton (SD-4), Van Taylor (SD-8), Kelly Hancock (SD-9), Carlos Uresti (SD-19), Eddie Lucio (SD-27), Charles Perry (SD-28), as well as Senator Konni Burton (SD-10), and Don Huffines (SD-16) who joined the panel for the day, are taking testimony regarding property tax reform and relief and the appraisal process in Texas. The 12-13% increase in average Dallas County homes follows a 14% increase in average Tarrant County homes, making the Dallas-Fort Worth area the epicenter of property tax increases in 2016 in Texas.

"We created this committee so people who cannot come to Austin could come and tell their stories," said Lieutenant Governor Patrick. **"Hear me clearly, we are not at war with local officials, but we are going to fight for the people of your districts that cannot afford these property tax increases. You don't have the luxury to spend people's money and price them out of their home...you just don't. We are going to reduce property taxes, I believe, in a significant way this legislative session."**

Comptroller office data shows that, statewide between 2005 and 2014, property taxes are rising 2.5 times faster than median household income. In Dallas County, county tax levies have increased 45%, city tax levies have increase 41%, and median household income has increased 20%. In Tarrant County, the City of Fort Worth has increased tax levies 55%, the highest of the four entities surveyed, while county tax levies have increased 36%, and median household income has increased only 20%.

"When you have property taxes increasing almost three times faster than Texan's paychecks, the system is unsustainable," said Chairman Bettencourt. **"I continue to be astonished when I hear the claim that this is not a tax increase. A 20% increase on homes in two years is a tax increase, and I will defend the taxpayers on this issue."**

Particularly noteworthy were comments by Senator Van Taylor (SD-8) highlighting that the number one issue he has been hearing from Texans is that property taxes are too high, and that based on this burden, Texans are being forced to change their lives to account for the increasing burden on their family budget. Also noted by Dallas County Chief Appraiser Ken Nolan, **"We (CAD's) are really not selling anything anybody wants to buy."**

The committee heard invited testimony from Dallas County Tax Assessor-Collector John Ames, Dallas County Chief Appraiser Kenneth Nolan, Tarrant County Tax Assessor-Collector Ron Wright, and Tarrant County Chief Appraiser Jeff Law. Public testimony will continue for the remainder of the day, and into the early evening, at the University of Texas at Arlington.

###

Members

Brandon Creighton
Eddie Lucio, Jr.
Van Taylor

Kelly Hancock
Charles Perry
Carlos Uresti