By:  Bonnen, Button H.B. No. 4179

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the procedures to be used by an appraisal district in resolving a protest following the filing of a notice of protest by a property owner.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  Section 25.19(b), Tax Code, as effective January 1, 2022, is amended to read as follows:

(b)  The chief appraiser shall separate real from personal property and include in the notice for each:

(1)  a list of the taxing units in which the property is taxable;

(2)  the appraised value of the property in the preceding year;

(3)  the taxable value of the property in the preceding year for each taxing unit taxing the property;

(4)  the appraised value of the property for the current year, the kind and amount of each exemption and partial exemption, if any, approved for the property for the current year and for the preceding year, and, if an exemption or partial exemption that was approved for the preceding year was canceled or reduced for the current year, the amount of the exemption or partial exemption canceled or reduced;

(5)  in italic typeface, the following statement: "The Texas Legislature does not set the amount of your local taxes. Your property tax burden is decided by your locally elected officials, and all inquiries concerning your taxes should be directed to those officials";

(6)  a detailed explanation of the time and procedure for protesting the value;

(7)  the date and place the appraisal review board will begin hearing protests; [~~and~~]

(8)  an explanation of the availability and purpose of an informal conference with the appraisal office before a hearing on a protest; and

(9)  a brief explanation that the governing body of each taxing unit decides whether or not taxes on the property will increase and the appraisal district only determines the value of the property.

SECTION 2.  Subchapter C, Chapter 41, Tax Code, is amended by adding Section 41.445 to read as follows:

Sec. 41.445.  INFORMAL CONFERENCE BEFORE HEARING ON PROTEST. (a) The appraisal district shall schedule an informal conference with the appraisal office for each property owner who files a notice of protest with the appraisal review board and requests an informal conference, to be held before the hearing on the protest. Notice of the date, time, and location of the informal conference shall be delivered to the property owner with the notice of protest hearing required under Section 41.46 or may be delivered electronically at the property owner's request.

(b)  Except as provided by Subsection (c), the informal conference may not be scheduled to be held on the same day on which the hearing on the protest is scheduled to be held or during the five-day period preceding that date unless the property owner agrees to the holding of the conference on the scheduled day.

(c)  On request made in writing by the property owner to the appraisal office with good cause shown, the appraisal office shall reschedule the informal conference for a later date that is before the date of the hearing on the protest. The rescheduling of the informal conference under this subsection does not require the delivery of additional written notice to the property owner. The appraisal office may reschedule the informal conference for a date during the five-day period described by Subsection (b) with the property owner's consent.

(d)  The appraisal office shall cancel the informal conference if the property owner informs the appraisal office, in writing, that the property owner elects not to participate in the conference.

(e)  The property owner's failure to appear at the informal conference does not prevent the appraisal review board from hearing the protest and issuing an order determining the protest.

SECTION 3.  Section 41.45(b-1), Tax Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b-1)  An appraisal review board shall conduct a hearing on a protest by telephone conference call if [~~:~~

[~~(1)~~]  the property owner notifies the board that the property owner intends to appear by telephone conference call in the owner's notice of protest or by written notice filed with the board not later than the 10th day before the date of the hearing [~~; or~~

[~~(2)  the board proposes that the hearing be conducted by telephone conference call and the property owner agrees to the hearing being conducted in that manner~~].

SECTION 4.  The change in law made by this Act applies only to a protest under Chapter 41, Tax Code, for which a notice of protest is filed by a property owner on or after the effective date of this Act. A protest under Chapter 41, Tax Code, for which a notice of protest is filed by a property owner before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect on the date the notice of protest is filed, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 5.  This Act takes effect January 1, 2022.