

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 1502

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

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Hearing Date: March 29, 2021 10:00 AM

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James Klein

Coastal Bend Sierra Club group

Corpus Christi, TX

I ask members of this committee to oppose all bills like HB 1556 by Rep Murphy that would extend and expand the Chapter 313 school property tax abatements. Oversight of these extravagant corporate giveaways is woefully inadequate, and most of the benefits go to multinational firms and out-of-state shareholders. We need to ensure working people can make ends meet — not hand out tax breaks to corporations.

Ruth Klein

Self

Richland Hills, TX

Do not pick corporate profits over Texans.

Craig Campbell

self retired

Austin, TX

Please don't renew this tax giveaway to out-of-state corporations.

Lourdes Sierra

SELF

Edinburg, TX

Dear committee members

My name is Lourdes Sierra and my grandchildren go to IDEA Edinburg District School.

HB1502 HB1556

To recover from the pandemic, our schools need more funds so that our children have a safe, well-airconditioned school so that they can have a healthy distance and good purified air.

We also need more school transportation so that our children are not crowded.

We especially need more teachers prepared for our special children.

So, thank you very much for reading my comments..

- Lourdes Sierra

8005 Jessica Lane Edinburg TX, 78542

Esther Cortez

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SELF

Edinburg, TX

Dear members of the committee:

My name is Esther Cortez. I live in Edinburg. I am the mother of a student in the Donna District. My 2 oldest children have already graduated and they were very happy with their work. I am grateful because they had a lot of support in High School.

My comments are on the proposed bills are that no cuts of funds should be made for schools. Those funds are needed to support the teachers because they are also spending out of their own pocket. Instead, give them more incentives.

More funds are needed to recover from the pandemic and for the students to have good hygiene measures. We need more resources for our bilingual students in Texas schools. It is very important us as parents that our children master the minimum two languages of English - Spanish and for the future of our children and the state of Texas.

Claudia Garcia

SELF

Pharr, TX

To whom it may concern

Representative members of the committee, I am very honored to greet you and write these notes regarding a certain part of the law extension HB 1556 and 1502 of economic development.

My name is Claudia Garcia. I am the mother of four students in the PSJA school district, currently studying at Raiders High School, LBJ Middle School and DR Long Elementary Respectively we reside in the city of Pharr TX, 78577

My comment is to ask you not to reduce the economic resources for our schools since now more than ever we need more maintenance in the facilities to disinfect the areas and have sufficient measures for the safety and health of our students as well as all staff and collaborators.

Also, we need more incentives or better salary for teachers since they sometimes have to contribute from their pocket for virtual classes.

Thank you very much in advance.

Aurelio Montemayor, Tax-payer

Self

San Antonio, TX

Whatever decisions you make about the Texas economy, economizing on our public schools is a foolish and counterproductive measure. Whatever shortage in taxes collected should not be a reason for reducing the state investment in our schools. Our school have been hit very hard by the pandemic and they need resources to recover. Within this bill there are statements to will result in less money from the state for our schools. The local tax bases were already heavily burdened by the reduction of state funds before the COVID crisis. To increase the local burden is unjust and harmful to the economic health of our communities and the state.

Our schools need added state money for the physical changes required. Our teachers need to be increased in number to allow for the smaller teacher-student ratio required by the health crisis.

Our students need the equipment required for the continuation of distance learning which will continue to some degree even after face-to-face in-school classes return. All aspects of the school must have more resources: the sports, choirs and band.

The COVID separation caused emotional and mental distress to students, teachers and families. Schools were ill-prepared to offer mental health services before the crisis. Now, when the needs are more acute and widespread, state resources must be provided.

For too long the state has reneged on its responsibility to fund our schools adequately. Now with this crisis, the state legislature should pass the bills that will give our public schools the badly needed funding and resources.

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Sheryl Moore

School Superintendent (retired)

Sealy, TX

Chapter 313 of the Tax Code was a brilliant piece of legislation when it was enacted. It performed exactly as legislators had hoped that it would. It has brought billions of dollars of investment to the state, lifted up school districts in the state's poorest regions, and added billions of dollars to the state's tax rolls. It works because it is fair to all parties.

**IF YOU TINKER WITH A WORKING SYSTEM YOU WILL CHANGE THE OUTCOME.** The state cannot afford to dismantle a successful economic development program. - Deshotel's bill simply extends Chapter 313 for another 10 years. I urge you to pass it in its current form.

Mackenzie Walters

Self - Attorney for Public Schools

Austin, TX

This bill is good for school districts and good for Texas. There are comments filed that Revenue Protection Payments should be eliminated. This would be bad for school districts and for the state. The monetary benefits for school districts may be a very big difference for these districts, and there is no reason for school districts to provide the tax limitation without receiving a benefit. I support HB 1502 as drafted, which would retain both renewables as well as RPPs. Additionally, I suggest that the \$100 per ADA limit should be raised to allow for more equitable negotiated benefits.

Dick Lavine

Every Texan (formerly the Center for Public Policy Priorities)

AUSTIN, TX

Every Texan (formerly the Center for Public Policy Priorities) has consistently opposed Chapter 313 school property tax abatements. The full analysis of the problems with Chapter 313 is here:

<https://everytexan.org/2021/02/25/end-chapter-313-abatements-and-free-up-future-state-revenue/>

Our specific objection to HB 1502 is the bill's proposed ten-year extension of the Chapter 313 school property tax abatement program without any examination or review of its effectiveness or efficiency. Every Texan has long advocated for a Sunset review of all tax breaks, like the Sunset review required of all state agencies, so the basic questions can be asked – what is the purpose of this tax break, is it achieving that purpose in the best manner, is there an alternative way to get to the same result. In the case of Chapter 313, is it really worth giving up \$1 billion a year in school property tax revenue?

The colossal giveaway strains the rest of General Revenue services — higher education, health and social services, and public safety — to make up for foregone local school taxes. Under current law, the program will expire at the end of 2022. No new abatements can be granted after expiration, but all agreements signed before expiration will continue for the length of each contract, which can run for 13 years or more.

The state budget fills in gaps in school taxes created by these giveaways by maintaining funding for a district's state formula aid, as if the abated value of the business property did not exist. If the property were instead taxed at its full value, local tax revenue would increase, reducing the need for state aid and allowing scarce General Revenue to be redirected to other uses or to increasing state support for preK-12.

Among the issues that should be addressed before extended the life of Chapter 313 include:

- These tax giveaways are outmoded.
- These tax giveaways are unnecessary.
- These agreements bring less taxable value than anticipated.
- These agreements are a costly way to create new jobs.
- These agreements are subject to little oversight.
- The benefits of Chapter 313 abatements go to out-of-state shareholders and high-income Texans.

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Susana Marez

SELF

Hargill, TX

Susana Marez

My name is Susana Marez. I have four kids in the Edinburg District. I live in Hargill TX, 78549.

I believe that every school is in need of more funding so that the Teachers are more willing to put in the extra work to help those kids who stayed behind in their education during the pandemic. So The schools and places zoned rural, have a better internet connection and quality so that they are able to be connected without any interruptions. I hope that schl funds aren't cut out because these funds are an important aspect in your children's education

David Hayward

Damon ISD

Rosharon, TX

As the superintendent of Damon ISD, a small rural school district, I support HB 1502 as written.

Jocelyn Resendez

SELF

Edinburg, TX

Dear Member of Committee My name is Jocelyn Resendez I live in Edinburg TX I have a daughter in Pre-k who attends Betts Elementary in Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District. It is important that our schools have more financial funds available so whenever the schools start fully reopening more teachers can be hired and that way our childrens won't all be so crowded in the classrooms and they can maintain a healthy distance during this pandemic.

Virginia Sstana

Self

Pharr, TX

As a parent I protest the idea of cutting the education budget at the federal or state levels, especially during this pandemic.

We need the budget to fund counseling in school districts in Texas.

Children across the land are experiencing stress and psychological issues including depression and in some cases suicidal thoughts or feelings of low self-worth. This comes from children?s long isolation and a lack of proper physical activities that would strengthen their physiological well-being including relational mindset and emotional stability.

Lucy Hernandez, Ms

Self

Pharr, TX

As a grandparent I protest the idea of cutting the education budget at the federal or state levels, especially during this pandemic.

We need the budget to fund a 1st World Menu for k-12 students in Texas.

The meals at school before and during this pandemic continue to be less than ideal: Foodstuff that is not edible or nutritious (not always but mostly too high in sugar content and with hundreds of chemicals as preservatives.... not at all organic!). It seems like

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much of it (especially breakfast meals are just 'fast food' coming straight from a McDonalds' kitchen.

Parents should have choices. There're times when the meals distributed are hearty and delicious. Many times, I much rather get a voucher to cook something fresh and home cook it for my grandchild.

The Education budget should allow for these choices by parents or grandparents, as we deem appropriate.

Fabio Angell

Self

Pharr, TX

Fabio

As a parent I protest the idea of cutting the education budget at the federal or state levels, especially during this pandemic.

We need the budget to fund education costs borne by parents at home in Texas.

Many households lack the means to pay for WI Fi. This is already a key tool for businesses which the IRS allows as a business cost. Yet, when it comes to education of our children, the school districts are not helping parents absorb this education cost. In my household, we spend about \$40 each month. Prior to the pandemic we had no use for Wi Fi since we used our iPhones 'hotspots' Other families are paying more in our neighborhood and across Texas. I used to pay \$75 per month for this service 6 years until I cut that off my budget.

In all, I find mind boggling that our leaders are threatening to decrease the education budget at state or federal levels.

Why would the government rather spend money on building tanks, ammunition or airplanes when it is more important to train children properly rather than training them later as soldiers that might already suffer from 'cognitive limitations' due to lack of access to proper education and proper food during their growing years?

Curtis Rhodes, Superintendent

Needville ISD

Needville, TX

I support HB 1502 as drafted, which would retain both renewables as well as RPPs. I also suggest that the \$100 per ADA limit should be raised to allow for more equitable negotiated benefits

Julie Ybarra, Teacher

Damon ISD

Bay city, TX

I support

Veronica Arredondo

Damon ISD

Damon, TX

I support HB 1502

Juan Flores

Retired

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San Antonio, TX

Honorable Committee Members: I urge you to vote NO to HB 1502 and HB 1556. These 2 Chapter 313 programs related to property tax abatements short-change our state economic growth opportunities during a critical period of recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. If enacted they will substantially reduce human capital investments in public and higher education, health and human services, and infrastructure. These are areas in which we continually fall short demonstrated by the suffering, lives lost, financial cost, and endless legal entanglements that are well documented. Examples include Foster Care, Mental Health, Public Education, and Public Health Infrastructure. I implore you to focus on the immediate economic recovery needs of our fellow Texans and our state. Recovery will take time and must be systematic – address immediate needs while investing in equitable economic mobility opportunities. Texas already had an inequitable tax system that places a greater burden on low-income residents, limits opportunities for economic mobility, and simply continues to perpetuate high poverty rates among too many Texas families. Chapter 313 abatements are unduly extravagant for a select few, brings less taxable value than anticipated, costly way to create new jobs, and their benefits to out-of-state shareholders and high-income Texans.

Please vote No to HB1502

Juan H. Flores, M.U.P.

July Beal

Damon ISD

Lake Jackson, TX

I support HB 1502 as it is originally written. The only change I support would be raising the \$100 per ADA limit to allow for more equitable negotiated benefits.

Sonny Cruse, Superintendent- Graham ISD

Graham Independent School District

Graham, TX

I believe this to be a good bill as it extends Chapter 313 of the Texas Tax Code. As such responsibility for the application fee and legal counsel for school districts will remain with the applicant. This is positive for school districts.

Chris Wigington, Superintendent

Bushland ISD

Bushland, TX

This bill should be highly considered by the committee as it simply extends Chapter 313 of the Texas Tax Code through 2032.

Rebecca Boaz

Damon ISD

DAMON, TX

I support

David Edgar

Deer Park Independent School Dist

Deer Park, TX

This bill, as drafted, would extend Chapter 313, as is, for an additional 10 years. This bill is good for school districts and good

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for Texas. There have been multiple comments filed by local EDCs and industry groups urging that HB 1502 be modified to 1) prohibit revenue protection payments and 2) retain eligibility for renewables. These two provisions of the bill should be left intact as they are vital to the funding of local independent school districts and benefit the economic development of Texas as well.

Rick Hartley, Superintendent

Blooming Grove ISD

Blooming Grove, TX

I am in full support of the bill as written. Please ignore suggested modifications by outsiders and industry representatives as they could negatively affect the education of students across the State.

Michael Valencia

McCamey ISD

McCamey, TX

McCamey ISD is in support of HB 1502 as we continue to see energy development in our area. The continuation of the 313 agreements as they are now is a benefit to our students, district, and community. HB 1502 will show the understanding of how a 313 benefits a community not just a company.

Ronald Segers, Dr.

Woodsboro ISD

Woodsboro, TX

I support HB 1502 as written. This is a good practice that encourages economic growth while protecting the interests of school districts.

Donna Hale, Superintendent

Miami ISD

Miami, TX

Please support this bill. There are few opportunities for rural communities to maintain and bring economic growth to our communities. Chapter 313 agreements are the best way to support rural Texas! The energy company in my district has brought families, students, and increased our tax base. The energy company has been wonderful in supporting the community and school district! They volunteer their time and resources when they can. HB 1502 is good for Texas!

Robert Gibson, Superintendent

Schleicher County ISD

Eldorado, TX

I ask that you please support this bill

Vicki Adams

Hillsboro ISD/Superintendent

HILLSBORO, TX

This is a good bill for school districts and would have a positive impact on students.

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Marc Faulkner, Superintendent

China Spring ISD

China Spring, TX

Please support this bill. It is a good bill. The extension of chapter 313 of the Texas Tax Code is imperative for public schools. Entrepreneurs, counties, cities, public schools, and the State of Texas all get some benefit from this extension. Please support this bill.

Helen Noble

DAMON ISD

Damon, TX

I am absolutely and completely opposed to HB 1566.

I support HB 1502 as it is originally written. The only change i support is raising the \$100 per ADA limit to allow for more equitable negotiated benefits

Helen Noble

DAMON ISD

Damon, TX

I AM ABSOLUTELY and COMPLETELY OPPOSED TO HB 1566!!!

Tyondria Rowe

Damon ISD

Missouri City, TX

I support HB 1502 as it is originally written. The only change I support would be raising the \$100 per ADA limit to allow for more equitable negotiated benefits.

Alexandria Noble

DAMON ISD

Damon, TX

I am completely opposed to HB 1566.

Sasha Soileau

DAMON ISD

Damon, TX

I am completely opposed to HB 1566.

Jim Dunlap

Carthage Independent School District

Carthage, TX

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Beneficial to Carthage ISD, HB 1502 as drafted, would retain both renewables as well as Revenue Protection Payments. To enhance local control giving local boards of trustees flexibility for local conditions, the \$100 per ADA limit should be raised to allow for more equitable negotiated benefits.

Jeff BALLARD, Superintendent  
Prairiland ISD  
Blossom, TX

This is a good bill for our school district. The extension of this program will allow us to do things for our students and teachers that cannot be done otherwise.

Gail Moldet, Business Manager  
McCamey Independent School District  
McCamey, TX

I am writing in support of HB 1502. As a small rural school district in West Texas, having entered into several 313 Agreements has been very beneficial to our district. Due to the loss of ASATR funding and the compression of tax rates, the 313 payments have helped our district.

Please consider the extension of Chapter 313.

Thank you

Shannon Allen, Dr.  
Beaumont Independent School District  
Beaumont, TX

This is an excellent bill and will continue to support school districts impacted. The districts current 313 agreements would remain the same. I am the superintendent in Beaumont ISD and fully support this bill. It's impact on my district is significant due to the increase in revenue that is necessary to support the needs of the students.

Lisa Olivas  
DamonISD  
West Columbia, TX

I support.

Curtis Rhodes, Mr  
Needville ISD  
Needville, TX

We support HB 1502. It is good for Texas and public education, Needville ISD in particular.

Curtis Rhodes  
Superintendent of Schools

Todd Wilson, Superintendent  
Chillicothe ISD  
Chillicothe, TX

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Please support HB 1502. 313 agreements have changed Chillicothe ISD for the good. It has extended the life of our district and facilities. Without 313 agreements we would not have had any opportunity to fix, upgrade or replace delapidated facilities. There is no money here for that. Please support HB1502.

JANET ROBERTS

SELF - TEACHER

DAMON, TX

I support HB 1502 as it is originally written. The only change I support would be raising the \$100 per ADA limit to allow for more equitable negotiated benefits.

Craig Campbell

RETIRED

Austin, TX

Please don't pass this legislation, extending Chapter 313 exemptions hurts our children and sick people who are dying because of lack of medical care. Choices limit resources which hurts the people.

John O'Brien, Superintendent

Van Vleck ISD

Van Vleck, TX

Thank you all for considering the bill. This bill would be good for Texas public schools and good for Texas.

Andy Reddock

Flatonia ISD

Flatonia, TX

I support HB 1502 which allows extension of the Texas economic Development Act through 2032. As a Texas public school superintendent for over seven years, I have seen how the Texas Economic Development Act has been able to transform my community through its positive impact in my school district. An investment in Texas public schools is an investment in our future generations.

Troi Johnson, Police Chief

Damon ISD

Manvel, TX

in favor of this bill

Matthew Rogers, Texas Resident

Baird school district

Baird, TX

I would like to see us keeping the 313 Agreement within the school district

Richard Waterhouse, Superintendent of Schools

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Skidmore-Tynan ISD

Skidmore, TX

School districts need this. Extending the Chapter 313 of the Texas Tax Code through 2032 is good for our tax payers and our kids.

Ben Prowell, Superintendent

Wellman-Union ISD

Wellman, TX

Please support this bill as it will benefit both schools and businesses.

Raul Chavarria

Crockett County Consolidated Common School District

Ozona, TX

On behalf of the CCCCSB Board of Trustees, I strongly support HB 1502 as drafted. We currently have three 313 agreements that have benefitted our school district in a positive way. Our Board has negotiated through the 313 agreements to attract windfarms to our county. The 313 Agreements have allowed payment protections to our district that have benefitted our staff and students, as well as provided much needed tax relief to our community.

Diane Frost, Dr.

Corsicana ISD

Corsicana, TX

Please support this Bill as it allows for the continued economic growth of Texas cities and towns by continuing the current processes.

Kayla Morrison

Lorenzo ISD - I am Superintendent

Lorenzo, TX

I am in favor of HB 1502 because the small 313 agreement that we have for our small 1A district gives us \$50,000 a year - I am not sure the tax money generated would be that much. We cannot afford any more financial burdens after this past year.

Martin Gutierrez, Mr.

San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

San Antonio, TX

For over 91 years, the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (SAHCC) has been San Antonio's leading advocate for Hispanic businesses and Hispanics in business. We pride ourselves on five pillars of success: small business, economic development, international trade, education, and leadership. On behalf of the Hispanic Chamber's more than 900 members, I write to you today to express our support for HB 1502, which reauthorizes Chapter 313 of the Texas Economic Development Act. One of our top fifteen legislative priorities this legislative session is maintaining and strengthening the availability of economic development incentives as a business recruitment tool that encourages significant jobs and capital investment including the ability for local governments to leverage economic development tools to encourage growth tailored to their region.

In a globally competitive economy, it is important that Texas has every economic development tool in the toolbox to recruit new businesses. School district property tax incentives keep Texas competitive with states which we compete for large capital

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investment projects. According to the most recent report by the Texas Comptroller, the 509 current and executed Chapter 313 agreements total a \$134 billion of investment through 2019. The data is clear – Chapter 313 works and one of the most important incentives in the toolbox.

As we continue our economic recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic, Texas needs all tools in the toolbox to attract large, capital-intensive projects to Texas. The San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce urges you to support HB 1502.

Julie Seymore, Executive Director  
Canton Economic Development Corporation  
Canton, TX

Please vote in favor of extending parts of the Texas Economic Development Act, as it is critical in Texas' ability to attract new businesses and create new jobs for our citizens.

Martin Gutierrez, Mr.  
San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce  
San Antonio, TX

I submitted comments earlier, but need to correct a statistic. Please use the comments below as the official comments on behalf of the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce:

For over 91 years, the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (SAHCC) has been San Antonio's leading advocate for Hispanic businesses and Hispanics in business. We pride ourselves on five pillars of success: small business, economic development, international trade, education, and leadership. On behalf of the Hispanic Chamber's more than 900 members, I write to you today to express our support for HB 1502, which reauthorizes Chapter 313 of the Texas Economic Development Act. One of our top fifteen legislative priorities this legislative session is maintaining and strengthening the availability of economic development incentives as a business recruitment tool that encourages significant jobs and capital investment including the ability for local governments to leverage economic development tools to encourage growth tailored to their region.

In a globally competitive economy, it is important that Texas has every economic development tool in the toolbox to recruit new businesses. School district property tax incentives keep Texas competitive with states which we compete for large capital investment projects. According to the most recent report by the Texas Comptroller, the 509 current and executed Chapter 313 agreements represent \$217 billion of investments. The data is clear – Chapter 313 works and one of the most important incentives in the toolbox.

As we continue our economic recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic, Texas needs all tools in the toolbox to attract large, capital-intensive projects to Texas. The San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce urges you to support HB 1502.

Candi Haeffner  
Damon ISD  
Angleton, TX

Completely support

Cynthia Reyna, CAFE MANAGER  
Damon isd  
Damon, TX

I support 1502

Susan Sloan  
American Clean Power  
Austin, TX

Using the Chapter 313 program, Texas has been able to attract more than \$60 billion in renewable energy investments. This is one of few tools rural Texas communities have to encourage large scale, capital investment. Please support this bill.

Heather Golden  
Self  
Houston, TX

Please do not extend the expiration date of the Texas Economic Development Act. At a minimum, there must be some adjustments made to how they are negotiated, governed, and considered in the state education funding formulas. These agreements should be negotiated and governed by economic development experts, not school boards. Locally elected school boards should not have the authority to spend tax dollars from the state's general fund. Not only that, school boards do not have the expertise needed to determine if an agreement will be beneficial to the whole state. The school boards also have a conflict of interest because they can negotiate supplemental payments from the companies involved for their district that are outside of the state's education funding formulas. While there is a limit on the size of each payment, there is no limit on how many agreements one district can negotiate and benefit from at a time. Therefore, many districts are receiving multiple payments each year. Barber's Hill ISD's payments equal over 50% of the Basic Allotment in the funding formula. That means the district is receiving 50% more funding than its neighbors but the revenue gap created by the agreement in the general revenue fund is filled by property taxes from across the state because the state ensures the district is kept whole with state aid. Again, the supplemental payments are NOT considered when that state aid is made up to the districts, those funds are a bonus to the district. Those payments must be included in the funding formulas to ensure a level playing field for all Texas students. Additionally, many of the companies are given waivers so they do not have to meet the job creation requirements in the law. These waivers completely undermine the spirit of the law, job creation. When a company does not create enough jobs to justify the tax relief given it is unfair to Texas homeowners. Property tax reform has been a big issue in Texas. Removing the waivers would go a long way to prevent further property tax increases in the future. Ultimately, the jobs created should not cost taxpayers more than the employee will earn over the life of that job. Economic development is vital to the health of our state. But it needs to make sense. Giving away money to the few at the expense of the many is not sustainable. People won't come here if they can't afford the property taxes. It is imperative that either the Texas Economic Development Act be allowed to expire or that it be overhauled so that it works for all Texans.

Kelley Brown McLaughlin  
Baird ISD  
Baird, TX

I support this bill. It will be good for Texas Education