

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on County Affairs

For Hearing Date: Wednesday, April 19, 2023 10:30 AM
or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

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Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

COMMENTS FOR HJR 134 by Bonnen

Paul Sweeney, Mr.

Self

Austin, TX

Save MUNY

Kathy Mishler, Young County Treasurer

Young county

Graham, TX

I do not support this bill.

Molly Cummings, Morris County Treasurer

Morris County

Daingerfield, TX

Do not abolish this office

Mary Horton, Jackson County Treasurer

Self - County Treasurer

Edna, TX

I oppose HJR 134. County Treasurers are an integral part of County government and essential for checks and balances.

Vi Swierc, County Treasurer

County Treasurer of Texas

Karnes City, TX

This would be very detrimental to all Treasurers of Texas. It is important to have checks and balances. This position is elected by the voters and it's important that they have a voice Please vote against this bill.

Gloria Benavides, County Treasurer

Jim Hogg County Treasures Office

Hebbronville, TX

I oppose Bill HJR 134

Mark Dominguez
Jim Wells County Treasurers office
Alice, TX

I oppose

Raul Reyes, County Treasurer
Webb County Treasurer's Office
Laredo, TX

Please let my opposition to this bill made public. We must protect the integrity of our state constitution and ensure we have the checks and balances in place to ensure accountability to our constituents.

Bill Sargent, Former Chief Deputy Clerk for Elections, Galveston County
Self
Galveston, TX

I oppose this legislation. I do so over structural concerns.

This measure was initially floated last session because of a \$500,000 mistake where the county paid a person posing as a legitimate contractor, instead of the actual company that provided services to the county. Having worked for Galveston County I understand the process through which pronouncements are processed. In order to approve purchases, one must first go through the purchasing department and also receive approval of the county auditor and county legal. Then it must be approved by the county commissioners. The County Treasurer – who is an elected official – simply processes the actual payment after all the appropriate approvals have been obtained. When this instance was investigated, no one department was found at fault, all had played a part.

By removing the position of County Treasurer, an important check and balance is removed from the process. All of the departments, other than the County Treasurer, ultimately report to the county commissioners. I am not concerned about any of the current commissioners in Galveston County, in fact I am friends of several of them. They are good people who can be trusted. However, what happens years from now if this is not the case?

It is unwise to get rid of a check and balance where the only person who does not report to commissioner's court – because he or she is elected separately (i.e. the County Treasurer) -- is no longer part of the process. It is precisely for this reason that I oppose the enactment of this legislation.

I encourage the committee to not move forward on this legislation or to not report it out of committee.

Again, I do not want to shed any negative light on any of our current elected officials in Galveston County, and in particular Greg Bonnen, the author of this legislation, who I view as one of the finest legislators in Texas House. This is a structural issue for me, not a personal one.

Carol Ann Martin, Treasurer
County of DeWitt
Cuero, TX

I am the elected County Treasurer for DeWitt County and I want to register my opposition to HJR134. I respectfully request that you vote no on this bill.

Abolishment does not bring real cost savings because it does not eliminate the need for key Treasurer functions, but it can erode transparency, accountability and fiduciary responsibilities to the taxpayers and voters.

Just as the State keeps the legislative functions separate from the Comptroller, the Elected County Treasurer preserves that same checks and balances at the county level.

Treasurers have specific statutory accountability that will be absent if this office was absorbed into an appointed office. Elected officials come and go, yet the institution remains and certainly should not be eliminated.

Heath Rosenstein
Self
Whitehouse, TX

Not in favor of abolishing the public office of Treasurer for Galveston County. If abolished, the continuation of a downward spiral will reap negative effects. Treasurer was created for checks and balances. Less oversight will only hurt the public!

Susan Willhelm, Winkler County Treasurer
Self
Kermit, TX

I disagree in the abolishment.

Ruben Cavazos, Hon. Willacy County Treasurer
Willacy County Treasurer
Raymondville, TX

I strongly oppose HJR 134. There is not a cost savings to the county because the position may be eliminated but the staff will still need to do the work. As elected officials we took the same oath as any Texas official to uphold the constitution and this is amendment is not abiding by your oath.

David Perez
Self
Farmers Branch, TX

We need our county treasurers

Orrin Hargrave, Trinity County Treasurer
Self
Groveton, TX

I oppose this bill as this will open many doors for further suits across the state of Texas. In addition there will most likely only be cost increases across the state instead of savings as County Auditor offices take on these additional responsibilities at higher rates of pay.

Macey Smith, Mr
Cochran County Treasurer
Morton, TX

Oppose

Melissa Karcher, Lampasas County Treasurer
CTAT
Lampasas, TX

I'm writing you this morning to ask you to vote NO on this bill SJR 28 by Middleton. I am opposed to the abolition of any Treasurer position because the Texas Constitution provided this office as a checks and balance system between offices with budgetary control and the county's treasury management. This is not just a Galveston County issue- this is a constitutional position. This system was created to prevent the concentration of power from being afforded to any office whether elected or appointed. No elected official is controlled by any other elected official, each answers to voters. Abolishment does not bring real cost savings because it does not eliminate the need for key Treasurer functions, but it can erode transparency, accountability, and fiduciary responsibilities to the taxpayers and voters. Treasurers have specific statutory accountability that will be absent once this office is absorbed into an appointed office. Elected officials come and go, yet the institution remains, and certainly should not be eliminated over a local squabble between elected officials. I thank you for your time and please vote NO on this bill!

Kevin Meissner
Financial Northeastern
Van Alstyne, TX

I disagree with the concept of abolishing a much needed position

Rachel Parker, Treasurer
CTAT, hill county treasurers office
Hillsboro, TX

I oppose this bill since we need checks and balances amongst our counties.

Zachary Brewer
Self
Houston, TX

I am not supporting this bill to abolish the office of the Galveston County Treasurer. This is a vital position in our local government.

Erin Curtis, Cherokee County Treasurer
Self. Cherokee County Treasurer
Rusk, TX

I oppose this bill because the Treasurer's office is an important office within the county. This office helps keep checks and balances within the county. Even if the office was abolished you would still have to the duties of the office. Thank you!

Lance Flores
Self
Fort Worth, TX

I am not in support of the bill.

Tricia Jacks, Sabine County Treasurer
Sabine County Treasurer
Hemphill, TX

Abolishment of a County Treasurer compromises the checks and balances.

Linda Acosta, Treasure
Milam County
Cameron, TX

Disagree In The abolishment of treasures office

Crystal Tucker, Treasurer
Cottle County Treasurer
Paducah, TX

I oppose HJR 134 proposing a constitutional amendment to abolish the office of County Treasurer of Galveston County. By doing away with this office we lose the system of checks and balances within county finance.

Clifford Kotara
Self
Bulverde, TX

Not in support of this bill.

Kirsta Koennecke, Scurry County Treasurer
Scurry County Treasurer Office
Snyder, TX

This is a state wide Elected official issue. If you are able to abolish 1 elected official position what other elected officials are you going to get rid of. Especially during a time when you as Representative tell the people you want to fight for more local control. If you are for local control you are against this bill. I urge you to VOTE NO.

Lois VanBeck, Treasurer
County Treasurer's Association
San Saba, TX

I oppose this amendment.

Melinda Krause, Lee County Treasurer
Self/Lee County Treasurer
Giddings, TX

Every County needs a County Treasurer handling their finances. You need checks and balances. My Commissioners Court depends on me a lot. Please do NOT take away this position for the taxpayers of Galveston County.

Rebecca McCullough, Parker County Treasurer
Self- Parker County Treasurer
Weatherford, TX

I oppose this bill. The office of County Treasurer is part of the Texas Constitution. It is imperative for this position to provide financial transparency and checks and balances in protecting tax payer monies. If this is abolished which elected position is next? Please do not let a local county issue become a state issue.
Thank you for your time.
Rebecca McCullough
Parker County Treasurer

JILL ATKINSON, County Treasurer
County Treasurers Association of Texas
Tilden, TX

I RESPECTFULLY ASK.. OPPOSE THIS BILL. The county treasurer office is imperative to the checks and balances process of public funds! If this passes it sets a precedent and other elected officials offices are in jeopardy. Abolishing this office will not save money, all duties would still need to be fulfilled by professionals.

Christy Long, Treasurer
Kent County Treasurer
Jayton, TX

I would like to file opposition to this bill. We must uphold our constitution. As a treasurer the importance of this office for checks and balances is so important. Please consider my recommendation of opposing HJR 134

Brooke Fuentes, Deaf Smith County Treasurer
Self County Treasurer
Hereford, TX

I oppose this bill. Treasurers are vital.

Sharon May, Parmer County Treasurer
Parmer County Treasurer's Office
Farwell, TX

I oppose this due to the fact these duties need to be carried out by the Treasurer in order to have checks & balances for county funds.

Misty Jones, Motley County Treasurer
CTAT
Matador, TX

I oppose this bill. Please think twice before you vote to abolish such an important role in county government.

Jeanne Wells
Self, Nolan County Treasurer
Sweetwater, TX

I strongly oppose the abolishment of this office as it is necessary for true checks and balances of our county monies.

Sheryl Pringle
Falls County Treasurer
Lott, TX

Please do NOT abolish the Galveston County Treasurer position. This is a necessary position to insure checks and balances in the daily operations of the county.

Stacia Leach
Self
Haskell, TX

Strongly oppose the proposal to abolish the office of County Treasurer of Galveston County. Very important office where many important duties are performed.

Rene Ellis, Jasper County Treasurer
Jasper County
Jasper, TX

I am against the abolishment of the office of county treasurer in Galveston County. All counties need checks and balances and this offside a big part of that.

Peggy Kramer, Treasurer
Self
Brenham, TX

The counties need the treasurer to balance duties with auditors

Jolina Flowers, County Treasurer
Swisher County Treasurer
Tulia, TX

I oppose this due to the fact that each county should have an elected treasurer for complete checks and balances and to represent the tax payers of that county.

David Betancourt, Treasurer
Cameron county
Brownsville, TX

This bill would destroy the separation of duties that are needed to protect county funds

Janet Bridges, Hall County Treasurer
Treasure of Hall County
Memphis, TX

I'm opposed to this bill. County treasurer office is vital for checks and balances in county government.

CHRISTINA DODRILL, Eastland County Treasurer
CTAT
Eastland, TX

I strongly oppose the abolition of the office of Galveston County Treasurer.

Randi McFarlin, Coryell County Treasurer
CTAT
Gatesville, TX

I strongly oppose the abolition of the Galveston County Treasurer.

Edward Contreras, Mr.
Self
San Antonio, TX

I apposed

Joseph Maverick
Self
Canyon Lake, TX

I oppose this.

Danielle Gonzales
Self
Lorena, TX

Oppose. The Treasurer's office is an elected office by the people to protect County funds. This elected office is essential for checks and balances within the County.

Jerry Yarbrough, County Treasurer
CTAT
Amherst, TX

I'm voting to oppose

Lupe Enriquez, County treasurer
CTAT
Rocksprings, TX

Strongly opposing this bill in abolishment of treasurers office.

Carleigh Ennis
Ward County Treasurer
Monahans, TX

I am against this bill. It will weaken to integrity of the county government as laid out in the constitution.

Kathy Blackwell, Johnson County Treasurer
CTAT/Johnson County
Cleburne, TX

I want to register my opposition to this bill. County Treasurers are a valid part of local government and provides checks and balances. Please vote NO to this bill.

Melinda Turner, Treasurer
CTAT
Franklin, TX

The office of County Treasurer is a very important position in my county as well as the other counties in the state. We have many job duties and responsibilities. Do not abolish the office of County Treasurer in Galveston Co.

Pam Browning, Bosque County Treasurer
Self, County Treasurer, CTAT
Meridian, TX

I oppose the abolishment of the Office of the County Treasurer. This action affects all County Treasurer's and removes the checks and balances of County finances put in place by the Texas Constitution.

Carolyn Huelster, County Treasurer
Irion County
Mertzon, TX

I am the County Treasurer of irion County and I represent the County in many and various aspects. The County Treasurer is a very important office and is an elected office that should be upheld. In my office I handle Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, HR, County Investments, Auditing of other County Offices, State Comptroller Reports, County Insurance, Employee Insurance, TCDRS, Budget Preparation, Etc. Tgese are duties that must be done and are extremely important to the County's well-being. Abolishing this office would be an absolute detriment to the County.

Joni Reed
Panola County Treasurer's Office
Carthage, TX

I ask that you please consider what an important position and the job duties and their importance in each County we serve.

Christy Khoury, Treasurer
Orange County, Texas
Bridge City, TX

We need to have the checks and balances between Auditors and Treasurer s always. The Treasurers Office is an elected office and should be a core office that can not be abolished and these threats would stop.

April Garcia, Payroll specialist
San Patricio County
Sinton, TX

every county needs a treasurer to conduct business.

Cleopatra Callaway, ECTOR County
County treasurer
Odessa, TX

Please support me against the bill

Debbie Southwell, CountyTreasurer
Self
Hondo, TX

Vote no

Darla Welch, Yoakum County Treasurer
CTAT
Plains, TX

I oppose this bill.

Kenny Edwards, Van Zandt County Treasurer
Van Zandt County Treasurer's Office
Ben Wheeler, TX

I vote no for this bill

Oscar Ortiz, Dimmit County Treasurer
Self Treasurer
Carrizo Springs, TX

I am against this bill due to the abolishment of the treasurers office in Galveston County. Statements have been made that this is a local issue although this bill will stand as a precedent that it is okay to abolish constitutionally protected offices. This can be extended to abolish any treasurer's office and we should not live in fear that our office can be abolished due to retaliation.

Ann Krpoun, Hon
Self
Brownwood, TX

This is starting a trend. What next? County Clerk, Constables, etc? Treasurers play a vital part in County government. Many treasurers have extensive duties beyond payroll and accounts payable. This a constitutional office. This is an important office for checks and balances.

Dinkie Parman, County Treasurer
Hartley County Treasurer Office
Channing, TX

I oppose this bill.

Blanca Betancourt
Concerned citizen
Brownsville, TX

I oppose the dismantling of our constitution by eliminating constitutional offices

Syndi Cadena, Treasurer
CTAT
Crane, TX

The job and duties of the Treasurer are never ending regardless of which county in question. It is unbelievable that there is even a thought to abolish. I ask that you reconsider and research before making a decision.

Magdalena Gonzales
self
El Cenizo, TX

I whole heartedly oppose this bill. It would eliminate the checks and balances in county government as an independent elected office.

Romeo Salinas, County Treasurer
County Treasurer's Office of Zapata
Zapata, TX

I oppose this bill

Melissa Shores, County Treasurer
Self- County Treasurer/CTAT
Atlanta, TX

I am opposed to this bill because the County Treasurer position is a constitutional office and is vital to County Government. There are Government Codes that state the job duty of the Treasurer. Taking away this office does not save money because even though you cut the office you still have to have someone to do the job. This time it's a Treasurer's office but the next time it could be a County Judge or even move to the State level. Please vote against this bill!

Stephen Jones, Hon.
Self, CTAT
Wichita Falls, TX

The county treasurer's office is very important to the function of the county as a whole. It is also an important part of checks and balances. It's possible that the wrong person in the office can have a negative impact, but that's not an excuse to abolish the office. Please vote to keep the Galveston county treasurer.

Kara Milligan, Treasurer
Moore County Treasurer's Office
Dumas, TX

OPPOSED

Daniel Valle
self
Laredo, TX

I oppose this bill. Please protect the integrity of the state constitution and elected offices.

Vivian Venegas, Treasurer
CTAT
Rankin, TX

I am opposed to this bill, due to the fact this is a constitutional elected office. By abolishing this position we silence the voice of the people and begin to erode the Texas Constitution one elected office at a time until none are left. The office of the Treasurer is the chief custodian of all of the county finances. As the fiscal officer of the county the office plays a key role in successful management of county government.

Elizabeth Tovar, County Treasurer
Zavala CountyHJR134
Crystal City, TX

Opposing Bill

Rebecca Luevano, Treasurer
Terrell County Treasurer office
Sanderson, TX

I made an oath to help and support my fellow officials.

Kitley Wasicek, Live Oak County Treasurer
Constituent, County Treasurer, CTAT member
George West, TX

My name is Kitley-Moffatt Wasicek and I am a fourth generation Live Oak County elected official and the sixth member of my family to hold office.

I am opposed to the erosion of the Texas constitution by eliminating the office of the County Treasurer or any elected official established by our forefathers. I am opposed to removing the autonomy of the County Treasurers office to oversee, protect and audit the assets (fiduciary and/or personnel) of any county. I am opposed to delegating the duties to other county offices therefore removing the separation of duties of these offices from their statutory duties. I am opposed to removing the office of the County Treasurer which gives a direct and easy method of communication to constituents who question finances within their county. Removing the offices of Treasurer dilutes the strength, independence, protection of the Texas Constitution, the voice of the constituent, the integrity of our forefathers who left the gift of Texas to future generations to protect. I question the intent of the Galveston County Treasurer in eroding the Treasurer's office outside of his unsubstantiated case of "saving a buck". Mr Dougie commented in Senate hearing that duties would be given to other offices; however Texas Treasurers who properly educate themselves know that all employees must be compensated appropriately based upon their job descriptions. Therefore, assigning more duties to established employees requires pay increases, unless procuring more employees is to be planned, which is contradictory to Mr. Dougie's case of saving money. I am of the opinion that the Galveston County Treasurer's claim are unfounded and to me and many others appear to be an effort to self-righteous claims that he is "taking down the system". My faith of the Texan system lies in our forefathers experiences, in their sorrows and struggles and in their desire to build a bigger, better, stronger independent state for future generations to thrive upon. I cannot and will not believe that the Fathers of the Texas Republic established this great state to be eroded by one individual, selling a personal agenda with no basis of education, experience or pride when he swore in front of God and countryman to protect and defend the Constitution of America and the great state of Texas. I implore you to please protect and honor the wishes and sacrifices of those who came before us and maintain the strength of the Texas' Constitution. Please feel free to contact me at anytime if I may assist you.

Thank you,
Kitley Moffatt-Wasicek
361-319-7736

Denise Salzbrenner, Carson County Treasurer
CTAT
Panhandle, TX

Please vote against abolishing Galveston and Somervell Texas Constitution position of County Treasurer.

Tammy Brown, Shackelford County Treasurer
CTAT
Albany, TX

I would ask that you vote NO to this abolition of an elected office. Why would you abolish an office because people can't get along. Elected officials come and go, and people need to be able to get along to do what is best for the people that elected them. Moving these duties to another office is not in the best interest of anyone. It is NOT A COST SAVINGS TO ANY ONE! Please vote NO and end this vendetta.

Lesa Crosswhite, County Treasurer
County Treasure Association of Texas
Abilene, TX

I am against the bill

Brandy Mygatt, Deputy Treasurer
Aransas County
Rockport, TX

Strongly disagree

Victoria Calloway, Treasurer
Self
Garden City, TX

Opposing this bad bill. I believe the treasurers office is vital to county government. I believe that this bill shouldn't even be considered.

Allyson Yonker
County Treasurers Association of Texas/ Mason County Treasurer
Mason, TX

I oppose this bill because I believe the County Treasurers office is vital to county government.

Patricia Randall, Chief Deputy Treasurer
TAC
Rockport, TX

I strongly oppose this bill. The office of Treasurer is vital to all local governments. It helps with accountability and transparency. There are too many jobs to list that the treasurer's office is responsible for, to many important jobs when go undone or get lost in the shuffle. Again, I strongly oppose this bill.

Deborah Grubbs
Self Denton county employee
Sanger, TX

Oppose.
Constitutionally created local government positions should not be abolished. This erodes the voice of the people and the checks and balances intended by the creators of the Texas constitution. If one office is abolished what keeps any office from abolishment?

KELLI WHITE, County Treasurer
County Treasurers Association of Texas
Tyler, TX

This is a constitutionally created office and should not be abolished. It's necessary to insure the proper checks and balances and for the taxpayers to have a say in who handles their tax money. A neighboring County abolished it in the 70s and they still struggle with proper checks and balances because all the duties went to the Auditor who is not an elected official. The law states duties are to be divided between Auditor and County Clerk but that's not what happened in the Counties who abolished Treasurer office, which means there are no checks and balances. All the employees moved to Auditors office and in most cases more staff was added, so there was no cost savings. The Counties who abolished the office all have a "Treasury Department" and that person makes more salary than the elected Treasurers in the same population bracket which also negates the argument of "saving money". It seems the issue is simply a personality conflict between the current Treasurer and the Commissioners Court and that is NOT a reason to abolish the office.

Tim Funchess, Jefferson County Treasurer
CTAT
Beaumont, TX

I am registering my opposition to this bill.

Angela Dees
Brazoria County
Angleton, TX

I oppose this bill.

Allyson Smith, Deputy Treasurer
Brazoria County
Angleton, TX

I oppose HJR 134. The office of the County Treasurer was written into the Texas Constitution to provide a separation of powers between the budgetary and fiduciary offices in county government. Abolishing elected offices takes power away from the citizens that reside within the jurisdiction. Elected officials answer to their constituents and I oppose any amendment to change this.

Laura Pawelek, County Treasurer
Atascosa County /CTAT
Jourdanton, TX

I am a Treasurer and a voting Citizen of Atascosa County. I'm totally against this. It goes against checks and balances which all well run businesses need, including County Government.

Jenifer Gierisch, Concho County Treasurer
Concho County Treasurer's office
Eden, TX

I strongly oppose HJR 134

Priscilla Cantu, Ms.
Self
Kingsville, TX

My name is Priscilla Alaniz Cantu, and I would like to ask you to vote NO on this bill to abolish the County Treasurer office in this county. I am in opposition in the abolishment of this office in this county or in any county in Texas. The Treasurer position was provided to us, the people, by the Texas Constitution to serve as a checks and balance system between offices with budgetary control and the county's treasury management. This is not just an issue for this county but for every county because it is a constitutional position. This system was created to prevent the concentration of power from being afforded to any office whether elected or appointed. No elected official answers to another elected official, we answer to the voters. Abolishment can erode the transparency, accountability, and fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers and voters. The elected County Treasurer preserves checks and balances at the county level. This is something every county should want in their process, instead of trying to have the office abolished in what I believe is more about conflict between elected officials. I thank you for taking the time to read my opposition.

Sincerely,
Priscilla A. Cantu
