The Houston Independent School District Board of Education voted to call an emergency election on May 6, to ask voters to authorize purchasing attendance credits from the state rather than face permanent detachment of valuable commercial property.

The state now considers HISD property-wealthy and under the current school funding laws, often called Robin Hood, voters must choose how the district will pay. Voters must either approve the "purchase of attendance credits" which allows HISD to write a check for the amount, or Houston's most valuable commercial property will be permanently detached and the property taxes will benefit another district. Whether voters support yes or no, HISD will have to pay in accordance with state law. Voting for proposition 1 is a better option for Houstonians and HISD kids.

Previously, HISD's recapture obligation was originally estimated at $162 million. Earlier this year the Texas Education Agency announced it would recognize half of the local homestead exemption and reduced the recapture obligation to $77.5 million or the permanent removal of $8 billion dollars' worth of commercial properties from HISD's tax roll.

HISD's Board Trustees Wanda Adams, Rhonda Skillern-Jones, Anna Eastman, Mike Lunceford, and Holly Maria Flynn Vilaseca voted to approve the election and give taxpayers a voice in how HISD will make the payment under current state law. Trustees Diana Dávila, Jolanda Jones, and Manuel Rodriguez voted against the election. If the measure fails, it will force HISD into detachment. Trustee Anne Sung abstained from voting.

Prop 1, if passed, would immediately stop the permanent detachment of the Galleria Mall (the largest mall in Texas), Greenway Plaza, the iconic downtown towers and buildings on Post Oak Blvd., and allow the district to send lower recapture payments to the state than those earlier projected. If the measure fails, detachment would begin in July of 2017, and the taxes from these properties would never return to HISD.

Business experts are warning that taxpayers will take a long term financial hit if Prop 1 fails. "By removing these properties, remaining homeowners and businesses will have to pay more to make up the difference," said Bob Harvey, President of the Greater Houston Partnership.

Education Experts are also deeply concerned about HISD's future if Prop 1 fails. "Permanently detaching HISD's most valuable business properties will ultimately result in drastic budget cuts and could force more neighborhood schools to close," said Greater Houston Partnership Public Policy Counsel Jesse Ayala.

"Permanently removing the most valuable business properties from HISD's tax base is bad policy and will force homeowners to bear a disproportionate share of school property taxes. Help me stop this by voting for HISD Prop 1."

- County Judge Ed Emmett

"By voting for Prop 1 we can stop the permanent and devastating impact of transferring billions of dollars out of HISD and trapping our kids in failing schools. Which is why every school district faced with this issue has chosen to write the check."

- State Representative Harold Dutton

"If you vote no, you are essentially voting yourself a $32 million tax increase."

- State Senator Paul Bettencourt

"Voting yes will keep more money in Houston's schools while giving our leaders in Austin the leverage to change our state's broken school funding system."

- Houston Mayor Pro Tempore Ellen Cohen

Only voters can stop transfer of billions of property tax dollars out of HISD

Local leaders Come Together to Urge a Vote For Prop 1
THE COST OF YOUR VOTE

Voting for Prop 1 saves HISD and Taxpayers $19.5 million.

A Vote FOR Prop 1 is Good For Everyone

By Ryan M. Leach, Central Houston, Inc.

Houston Independent School District voters will determine whether HISD will permanently lose billions of dollars in taxable commercial property value through a process involving detachment and annexation. Proposition 1 will be on the ballot on May 6. (Early Voting starts April 24-May 2) and the choice is clear. A vote for Prop 1 will make sure that value stays in HISD and that those dollars go to the kids in our neighborhood schools.

The facts are clear: HISD has become a property wealthy school district according to state law. That same law requires that property wealthy districts, like HISD, contribute to help fund property poor districts. The voters must decide how to pay that bill. The law may not be fair, but fairness is not what we are voting on with Proposition 1.

Central Houston Inc. is supporting Prop 1 because we know the buildings that compose the downtown skyline do not only inspire our future leaders, they provide the critical funding our schools need. Removing the education tax dollars from these skyscrapers hurts all school children and raises taxes for everyone. Most importantly, detachment is permanent. There is no provision in state law that would allow HISD to get these properties back. Houstonians must vote for Prop 1 on May 6 and make sure HISD’s most valuable taxable commercial properties continue to help fund HISD.

The simple-truth, voting for Prop 1 keeps the HISD community together and allows the property taxes from businesses like ours to help play an important part in funding public education in Houston. We want the tax money from H-E-B stores in HISD funding public schools in HISD.

- Scott McClelland, President, H-E-B Grocery Stores Houston Division

Fighting the Wrong Fight

Every election is about the future. This election will decide the future of HISD and how it will comply with the current school financing law. Experts across Texas agree that voting for Prop 1 will keep Houston in charge and costs less.

A few of HISD’s Trustees, lead by Jolanda Jones, are openly opposing a “yes” vote because they want the legislature to overhaul school financing. While many believe the state’s school financing system should be overhauled, that is not what this election is about.

Any opposition to Prop 1, based solely on changing the current way the state equalizes school funding is short sighted, risky, and jeopardizes every child that attends HISD schools. This election is asking voters how they want HISD to comply with the current law, not if voters like the current law. This issue is so important that a bi-partisan group of business, community and education leaders have come together in the interest of Houston students and taxpayers. Working together, we can pass Prop 1 and keep us in charge.

COMMUNITY LEADERS AND GROUPS SUPPORTING HISD

County Judge Ed Emmett
State Senator Paul Bettencourt
State Representative Alma Allen
State Representative Jim Murphy
State Representative Sarah Davis
State Representative Jarvis Johnson
State Representative Harold Dutton, Jr.
State Representative Sharon Thierry
HISD Board President Wanda Adams
HISD Board Member Mike Luecke
HISD Board Member Rhonda Skillern-Jones
HISD Board Member Anna Eastman
HISD Board Member Holly Maria Flynn Vilaseca

Houston Voter News

Voting Prop 1 is the only Choice

by: State Representative Jim Murphy

On May 6, Houston Independent School District (HISD) voters get a do-over, with the chance to keep $8 billion in commercial property on the tax rolls, for the benefit of HISD schools and HISD schoolchildren, by voting for Proposition One.

How did we get here, and why should voters change their vote?

In November, voters angry that state school funding formulas declared HISD property wealthy revolted against sending an estimated $162 million in recapture funding to the state. It made sense at the time: how can we send local dollars to benefit kids from another district when the majority of our students qualify for free- and-reduced lunch? But not many voters understood that it was not a question of if HISD would pay recapture, only a question of how.

The consequences of that vote have finally come to light, and the remedy is worse than the original ailment. Unless voters approve Prop One on May 6, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) will permanently “detach” $8 billion in commercial property from HISD tax rolls. This will include properties like the Galleria, Greenway Plaza and Chase Tower. Hundreds of millions of dollars in property tax revenue collected on some of Houston’s priciest commercial property will no longer be used to educate Houston schoolchildren. It will be sent to another school district, to educate children who don’t live in HISD. And this detachment is permanent because there is no provision in current law to bring detached property back onto the tax rolls.

The net effect of detachment will be a tax increase for remaining HISD property owners. In previous elections voters passed bonds that took into consideration the entire property tax base, and the revenue needed to pay our existing $2 billion in bonds will come from a newly reduced tax base, meaning more will be charged to every taxpayer.

For the businesses that occupy the $8 billion in commercial property there will also be a tax increase, because their property will be taxed at a rate that is nine percent higher than the current HISD rate. The fact is, everyone currently in HISD will pay more if Prop One fails.

That’s why a bipartisan coalition of leaders are backing passage of Proposition One. We want to keep revenue from HISD properties in HISD, to the benefit of local school children.

When we voted last November, keeping recapture dollars away from the state seemed like a sensible idea. But there’s a reason no district had chosen this nuclear option before: because the cost of permanent detachment of commercially viable properties is too high a price to pay.

I hope all HISD voters will join me in supporting Prop One on May 6.

vote for Prop 1

by State Representative Alma Allen

Dozens of our community’s landmark buildings risk being removed from HISD tax rolls. Under detachment and annexation, billions of dollars of property taxes from the Galleria, Greenway Plaza, and a number of downtown skyscrapers will be permanently transferred away from HISD.

It gets even worse for residential property tax payers. Within a few years, HISD stands to lose all its commercial property, a whopping 44% of its entire tax base. Under this scenario, residential properties - both single and multi-family housing – will be forced to shoulder a disproportionate share of HISD’s operating costs and debt obligations.

Increased taxes are not the only problem detachment brings. Once another school district absorbs all the property it can, HISD loses $19 million more if the property is detached. Plus detachment is permanent, meaning HISD would forever lose the ability to tax the detached property.

If we fail, we run the risk of trapping kids in underfunded schools while taxpayers pay more and higher property taxes.

May 6 offers a rare second opportunity to stop detachment and secure a better future for our entire community.

Please join me by voting FOR Prop 1 on May 6h.

WHAT ARE THE CHOICES ON MAY 6?

- The choices are dictated by state law.
- Voters will either instruct HISD to:
  1) purchase attendance credits, or
  2) ask the state to remove high-value property located within HISD.
- Voting FOR Prop 1 enables HISD to purchase attendance credits, which reduces wealth status. A FOR vote is best for students, the school district, and taxpayers that support the school district because it preserves the greatest amount of resources.
- Voting NO shifts the power to the TEA, the state agency that oversees public schools. Under current law, TEA will remove valuable property from HISD’s tax base and reassess it to another school district FOREVER.

HOW WILL IT AFFECT ME?

- This election will affect everyone: students, teachers, the district, and taxpayers.
- There is a strong link between a school district and the taxpayers that support the school district.
- Even if you rent your apartment and you don’t have children in HISD, the costs of running the largest school district in the state are part of your expenses.
- HISD currently has 215,000 students, which exceeds the enrollment of every other school district in the state by at least 55,000 students.
- Voting FOR Prop 1 will reduce the district’s financial obligation under the state’s Robin Hood laws and keep more money available to educate children.

VOTE FOR PROP 1 ON MAY 6!
May 6, 2017 Joint Election Early Voting Schedule
Horario para Votar Temprano en la Elección Conjunta del 6 de mayo de 2017
Lịch Trình Bầu Cử Sớm cho Cuộc Bầu Kế Hợp ngày 6 tháng 5, 2017


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<tr>
<td>Main Office</td>
<td>Harris County Administration Building</td>
<td>713.755.6965</td>
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<td>Moody Park</td>
<td>Moody Park Community Center</td>
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For more information - Para mas información - Để biết thêm chi tiết: www.HarrisVotes.com - 713.755.6965

STAN STANART
Harris County Clerk
Secretario del Condado de Harris
Gonzalo Hinojosa Hilke, County Clerk of Harris County

HARRIS COUNTY - CONDADO DE HARRIS - QUÁN HARRIS - HARRIS