

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4315

May 30, 2023

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Office of the Governor
State of Texas
P.O. Box 1248
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Governor Abbott:

As Texans recover from the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent inflation, we must continue to ensure that our small businesses and constituents have the resources they need to thrive. However, the recent increases in property taxes are impeding the growth of our communities and local economies.

Texans pay some of the highest property taxes in the country. Recent property appraisal values across Texas have increased at least 25 percent¹ from the previous year. In Cameron County alone, which is in Texas' 34th Congressional District, rates have risen as high as 31 ½ percent². Our small businesses, low-and -middle-class families, and elderly Texans need property tax relief now.

Although the job market has begun to stabilize, it has not been enough to offset the rising cost of living for many families. From the gas pump to the grocery store – the costs of everyday items continue to strain South Texans' budgets. Which is why I respectfully urge you to issue an executive order to freeze all property taxes for the next calendar year, including interests and penalties.

I am well aware that property taxes, more than any other source, provide the most tax dollars for local services in the state of Texas, including schools, streets, roads, police, fire protection, emergency medical services, and more. However, we cannot continue to ask our working families to do more with less.

Freezing property taxes will allow our fellow Texans to pay the same amount they paid before, while at the same time, continue to maintain the essential services that are funded with those tax dollars.

¹ Scott, Alexis. "Homeowner property appraisals skyrocketing in Texas." *KRIS 6 News*, 10 April 2023, <https://www.kristv.com/news/local-news/homeowner-property-appraisals-skyrocketing-in-texas>.

² McCaffrey, Frank. "Cameron County home appraisals going up, sales said to be reason." *Valley Central*, 27 April 2023, <https://www.valleycentral.com/news/local-news/cameron-county-home-appraisals-going-up-sales-said-to-be-reason/>.

I understand that local officials set the property tax value, but you have the power as Governor to provide relief through executive action. In your 2023 State of the State Address, you mentioned property tax reform, including designating lowering property taxes, as the top priority in your “seven emergency items” for the 88th Session of the Texas Legislature.

The call to lower property taxes is not new. This issue has garnered bipartisan support within the State Legislature, but until they reach a consensus on how to best move forward, I urge you to issue an executive order and freeze property taxes for the next calendar year.

Texans need assistance now, and unless their state elected officials act, they risk being taxed out of their homes. Therefore, I urge your immediate action on this issue and look forward to working with you to better the life of all Texans. I appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'VGMA', enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress