



April 12, 2019

Dear Governor Abbott, Lt. Governor Patrick, Speaker Bonnen & Honorable Members of the 86th Texas Legislature:

We, the chief executives of the 6 largest urbanized counties in Texas, believe ardently in the need for property tax relief. We fully support the Texas Legislature's commitment to state funding for public education, greatly reducing the State's reliance on local property taxes. But we are troubled by legislative proposals for revenue caps that force deep cuts in other services and infrastructure at the local level.

The State expects our investment of local property taxes in courts, jails, hospitals, roads, and economic development occurring in the major employment centers of Texas. We are confused by how we could continue to meet the State's expectations under the proposed revenue caps. Nearly half of the population of the Texas resides in Harris, Dallas, Tarrant, Bexar, El Paso and Travis counties. We have reviewed the history and the likely trends of State investment relative to local property tax investment for our growing constituencies.

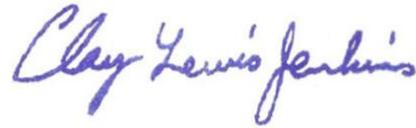
We say with the confidence of experience and solid statistical and financial analysis that State funding is not likely to increase substantially even as our population increases. In order to continue providing the services necessary for predictable growth and responding to the unpredictable economic downturns, natural disasters, health or crime epidemics, or refugees, we must have the local discretion to invest appropriately in justice and public safety, transportation, public health and quality of life. Texas is already at thin margins of investment in these necessities.

The proposed revenue caps will make those margins even thinner, forcing local elected officials to reduce their investments thereby escalating the deterioration of our courts, our jails, our roads, our resiliency, our quality of life and our Texas.

We ask the Legislature to work with us on solutions that deliver real tax relief while protecting the critical services we provide our residents.



NELSON W. WOLFF
Bexar County Judge



CLAY JENKINS
Dallas County Judge



RICARDO SAMANIEGO
El Paso County Judge



LINA HIDALGO
Harris County Judge



GLEN WHITLEY
Tarrant County Judge



SARAH ECKHARDT
Travis County Judge