



Testimony to House Intergovernmental Affairs Committee Against HB 46 (89(2))

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August 22, 2025

Every Texan is an independent research organization that, for 40 years, has advocated for public policy for better access to quality health care, food security, education, fairer taxation and good jobs for all Texans. **We oppose HB 46, which would strictly limit local government expenditures.**

Given the broad nature of this bill, this issue should be addressed in the next regular session, when members and stakeholders have more time to review data, discuss concerns with constituents, and consider alternative options.

Simply put, this is a local control issue. This bill would continue to chip away at local governments' authority to set their own budgets. Local governments are the best providers of on-the-ground services we rely on, such as our roads, parks, police, fire and EMS.

Adding more hurdles to locally-elected officials' workloads just makes their job harder. To serve constituents, local government officials must have the flexibility to respond to their communities' needs. They hear from their constituents when potholes aren't filled and when trash isn't picked up.

Local governments have transparent budget processes with ample opportunity for public input. If the Legislature is concerned about local government budgets, members should discuss their specific concerns with specific localities rather than remaking statewide policy so broadly.

Local governments are being squeezed by higher costs. In particular, the prices for many of the goods and services purchased by local governments have increased more than general inflation: construction costs, equipment and facility maintenance costs, infrastructure, electricity, public transportation, health insurance, wages, and more.

If local governments cannot set their own spending levels, local services might become the Legislature's responsibility. State lawmakers aiming to claim more authority over local government budgets should be prepared to provide greater assistance and ease unfunded mandates.

Some details remain unclear. It is difficult to tell how this bill would interact in practice with other limitations on local government spending and revenue collection, such as the constraints on reducing police budgets. Furthermore, ETJ growth does not seem to be taken into account in the bill's calculations.