



CITY OF HOUSTON

Sylvester Turner

Mayor

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July 21, 2017

The Honorable Joan Huffman, Chair, the Honorable Bryan Hughes, Vice Chair, and the Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on State Affairs:

I write today in opposition to Senate Bill 6. This bill would impede the process by which cities annex territory within its extraterritorial jurisdiction. The bill's burdens would impair cities' ability to protect themselves from deteriorating peripheral areas and from the costs of supporting nearby residents, and result in inefficient use of public resources.

Cities are Texas' biggest economic engines and annexation is a necessary tool for cities like Houston to continue to support growth and remain dynamic. Without the ability to fix its own boundaries, a city cannot adequately plan its future or for the future of the region.

The Legislature has long held that municipalities should be able to annex territories within their extraterritorial jurisdiction for the purposes of providing for the general health safety and welfare of persons residing in, and adjacent to, the municipality. This bill will mean that municipalities will, for all practical purposes, be unable to conduct annexations and provide infrastructure, public safety, and other services to support nearby areas. Consequently, this bill will contribute to deterioration of areas beyond city limits, where city services are unavailable.

Furthermore, according to the Center for Houston's Future, Houston's daytime population increases by more than 31 percent every weekday. For these commuters, who live outside Houston but travel throughout the city, Houston provides a safe place to conduct business and attend social and cultural events. The City must be able to fund infrastructure, public safety and cultural amenities throughout Houston to support the more than 600,000 non-Houstonians who enter our city daily. Unless Houston increases taxes on existing residents and property owners, our city needs to retain the ability to grow through annexation to support these commuters.

Previous legislatures have already reformed the annexation process and curtailed municipal annexation authority. Based on those reforms, the City has maintained a responsible annexation policy that that is mutually beneficial for the City and the region. This bill further restricts Houston's authority and can have dire results for the region.

The regulations proposed in Senate Bill 6 will be burdensome, will cause inefficient use of public funds, and impairs cities' ability to provide for the needs of the city and region. I urge you to oppose this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Sylvester Turner", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Sylvester Turner
Mayor, City of Houston