



TSTA NEWS

TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION 8716 N. Mopac Expressway, Austin, TX 78759 • 877-ASK-TSTA • www.tsta.org • Fax 512-486-7049

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 16, 2017

Contact: Clay Robison
512.476.5355, ext. 1313
cell: 512.535.8994

Abbott's, Patrick's most harmful missed opportunity

TSTA President Noel Candelaria issued the following statement regarding the most glaring missed opportunity during the special session:

The singular failure of the recent special session was Governor Abbott's and Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick's refusal to support the effort by Texas House leaders to address the woefully inadequate level of state funding for our local public schools.

Abbott and Patrick like to talk about property tax relief, but their failure to provide additional state funding for public schools is responsible for property tax increases in community after community across our great state. When the late Mark White was governor, the state share of education funding was 67 percent. Just a decade ago, the state share was nearly 50 percent. Today, it is 38 percent and falling faster than the president's poll numbers. Local property taxpayers are forced to make up the difference, while teachers have to spend hundreds of dollars out-of-pocket to provide supplies for their classrooms.

The House passed a solid plan to provide an additional \$1.8 billion for public schools, and Dan Patrick's Senate said no. Our children deserve better. Educators deserve better. Local taxpayers deserve better. But Abbott and Patrick turned their backs on them. They also are out of step with most Texas voters.

Recent polling by TSTA shows that most Texas voters believe the state should increase school funding. 79 percent believe the state "should provide additional funds for schools to provide relief for rising property taxes," and by a 56 to 39 percent margin, Republican primary voters support "using some of the Rainy Day Fund for public schools."

Instead, the governor and the lieutenant governor peddled discrimination and threatened our economy with the failed bathroom bill and dangled the false promise of property tax "relief" with Senate Bill 1. SB1 was not and is not a property tax cut. Neither the Senate version nor the House version of SB1 would have taken a dime off anyone's property tax bill.

Sadly, Abbott and Patrick deliberately missed their opportunity to provide real property tax relief to Texans by refusing to support the House's school finance bill. As Speaker Straus correctly pointed out, you can't reduce local property taxes without addressing school finance. More importantly, we cannot prepare our children for a prosperous future unless other state leaders join the effort to provide every child the opportunity to study and learn in a great public school.