



CITY OF HOUSTON
CITY COUNCIL

FRED FLICKINGER

DISTRICT E COUNCIL MEMBER

The Honorable Paul Bettencourt
Chair
Senate Committee on Local Government
P.O. Box 12068
Capitol Station
Austin, TX 78711

April 23, 2025

Re: Support for Senate Bill 2521

Dear Chairman Bettencourt, Vice Chairman Middleton, and Committee Members:

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 2521, which provides Texas cities and appraisal districts with a valuable tool to address an often-overlooked issue—squatters occupying homes following the death of a property owner.

Currently, when a homeowner passes away, their homestead exemption often remains in place for years due to delays in reporting. During that time, homes may sit vacant, unmonitored, or fall into a legal gray area regarding ownership. This creates prime conditions for squatters or unauthorized occupants to take over, undermining neighborhood stability and public safety.

SB 2521 would require local registrars to provide monthly death certificate reports to county appraisal districts, enabling timely removal of property tax exemptions no longer legally valid. By flagging these properties earlier, appraisal districts, cities, and law enforcement can intervene before a home becomes vulnerable to squatting or neglect.

This bill supports responsible property tax practices while giving municipalities like Houston an additional means to track and secure homes at risk. It strengthens our ability to preserve neighborhood integrity and ensure fair taxation across the board.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue impacting Texans across the state. I kindly request your support to pass SB 2521 and help Texans combat squatting and the abuse of homestead exemptions more effectively.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "FD 1", is written over the signature line.

Fred Flickinger
City of Houston
Council Member, District E