

Written Testimony of Bob Popinski
Director of Policy
Raise Your Hand Texas

Before the House Public Education Committee
The Honorable Dan Huberty, Chair
March 19, 2019

House Bill 462 and HJR 24 by Representative Charlie Geren
Position: Support

KEY POINTS

- The Constitutional amendment and the implementing legislation ensure a fair proportion of state effort to match that of locally-elected school boards.
 - The current level of state support is low enough to warrant a gradual increase to meet the 50 percent threshold.
 - We would also suggest an exclusion be required for any state appropriations to the Teacher Retirement System when calculating the state or local share.
-

Chairman Huberty and Members of the Committee:

Raise Your Hand Texas supports Representative Charlie Geren's HJR 24 and the implementing legislation in HB 462. Article VII, Section 1 of the Texas Constitution assigns to the Legislature the responsibility for structuring and funding a system of public schools. It is entirely appropriate for the state to bear one-half of the total cost, a level it has approached in the past. The amendment would encourage future legislatures to focus on this existing Constitutional obligation and ensure a fair proportion of state effort to match that of locally-elected school boards.

We would suggest two additions to the bill and resolution:

1. The current level of state support is low enough to warrant a gradual increase to meet the 50 percent threshold. We would suggest a phase-in of no more than five years to

allow the Legislature to plan for reallocation of existing state resources while maintaining a suitable and equitable school finance system.

2. The language of HJR 24 appropriately excludes recapture of local taxes from the state's share of support for public schools. We suggest this legislation require a similar exclusion for state appropriations to the Teacher Retirement System. While TRS has never in the past been considered as part of the state or local share, discussions during recent School Finance Commission meetings included TRS as part of the state share calculations, which creates confusion in this Constitutional proposal. TRS should not be introduced to this calculation as the Legislature considers this important proposal.

CONTACTS

Michelle Smith, PhD

*Director of
Governmental Relations*
(c) 512-466-0238

Bob Popinski

Director of Policy
(o) 512-617-2553

David Anderson

*General Counsel and
Policy Analyst*
(o) 512-617-2129