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Senate Panel Approves Three House Tax Reform Bills

AUSTIN — After nearly two decades of attempts by lawmakers and judges to improve how Texas finances public education, big and widespread changes to the tax code seem increasingly likely at midpoint in the 30-day special session.

Five separate tax-reforming bills sped through the full House on April 24 and 27 and crossed over to the Senate.

Straightway on April 28, the 15-member Senate Finance committee passed three of those five pieces of legislation.

Votes were party-line, with Demo-

crats Judith Zaffirini of Laredo, John Whitmire of Houston, Royce West of Dallas and Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa of McAllen registering "nays" because, they said, the legislation is too much about cutting taxes and not enough about educating children.

The five pieces of legislation

House Bill 1, by Warren Chisum, R-Pampa, taps the state's budget surplus to buy down the school district maintenance and operation property tax rate to what some feel is an acceptable \$1.33 per \$100 valuation. HB 1 has been labeled the "get out of Dodge" bill because it is a short-term fix that does

not address long-term problems in the current system of taxation.

HB 2, by Jim Pitts, R-Waxahachie, dedicates all new revenue from House bills 3, 4 and 5 to a fund that would only be used to reduce school district maintenance and operation tax rates.

A substitute for HB 2, by Tommy Williams, R-The Woodlands, was adopted by Senate Finance, making it eligible for consideration by the full Senate. The substitute provides that new revenue from the three bills will reduce maintenance and operation tax rates until the average rate gets down to \$1.

HB 3, by Rep. Jim Keffer, R-Eastland, kills the franchise tax and replaces it with a business activity or "margin" tax. It is the most revolutionary bill of the batch. Finance passed this bill, and it is eligible for consideration by the full Senate.

Supporters say HB 3 brings prop-

erty tax relief, broadens the base of businesses that must pay it, and generally lowers the tax rate for all taxable entities.

Opponents say the tax is an income tax in disguise, and it will shock business owners by costing them more than the present taxing scheme. Such a tax, they said, also would slow down commerce and cause businesses to close or leave Texas.

HB 4, by David Swinford, R-Amarillo, is the so-called liar's affidavit bill that would force a buyer of a used car to pay sales tax on the book value of the car. Senate Finance passed this bill, and it is eligible for consideration by the full Senate.

HB 5 by Peggy Hamric, R-Houston, increases the state sales tax on cigarettes by \$1. If passed, the tax on a pack of cigarettes will be \$1.41.

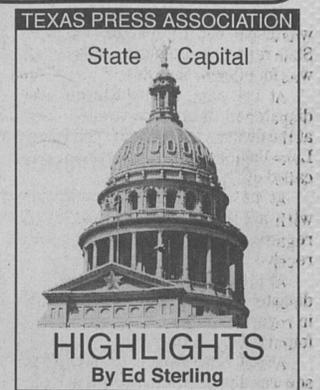
Background on special session
The main purpose of this [3rd

special session of the 79th Texas Legislature is to cure the stamp of "unconstitutional" placed on the state's method of school district property taxation by the Texas Supreme Court last fall.

The high court found that hundreds of the state's 1,049 school districts, left with no choice but to set the maximum allowable rate of \$1.50 per \$100 valuation, had lost "meaningful discretion" in setting rates.

The high court then ordered the governor and Legislature to fix the tax system by June 1.

Gov. Rick Perry called on former state comptroller John Sharp to head a new 24-member tax reform commission. The commission soaked up input from citizens and businesses across the state in a two-month series of public hearings. In March, the Perry-Sharp tax reform proposal was completed.



HIGHLIGHTS
By Ed Sterling

Pro-immigrant march scheduled
Up to 40,000 people were expected to participate in a downtown Austin rally and march to the Capitol on May 1, in support of immigrants living and working in Texas, and in reaction to a federal crackdown on businesses employing undocumented workers.



VOTE FOR
CARLOS GONZALEZ

RICE CONSOLIDATED
SCHOOL BOARD
POSITION 1

Let's Look Back... 24 & 48 YEARS AGO

April 29, 1982
Rev. Charles Runk, pastor of United Methodist Church in Eagle Lake, was honored on his 30th anniversary as an ordained minister with a covered dish luncheon...

James Rhodes captured first place in the shot put at the 22-3A track meet in Waller...

The University of Texas Chapter of Phi Eta Sigma honor society initiated 254 new members. Among them was Judy Bunge, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jimmie Bunge of Garwood...

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Moreida announced the arrival of a son, Robert Paul, born April 6. He was welcomed home by a brother, Bruno, 13; and sister, Briana, age three...

Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Shindler, owners of Shindler Electric, purchased the Eagle Lake Auto Repair and Body Shop from the estate of the late Tommy Pate...

The descendants of William and Julia Lillie Struss attended a family reunion at the W.A. Struss place in

Shaws Bend on April 18...

Sheriff Jim Broussard of Colorado County was nominated for the Veterans of Foreign Wars' annual "Law Enforcement Officer of the Year" award...

Mr. and Mrs. Buddy Mills announced the arrival of a son, Dustin Christopher, born April 21 at Gulf Coast Medical Center in Wharton...

A baby shower was held April 25 for Mrs. Diane Weaver at the home of Judy Lueddecke...

John Lee Korenek, Jr. son of Mr. and Mrs. John Lee Korenek, Sr. earned second place in a statewide highly competitive abstract division. Korenek was also awarded the first \$1,000 memorial scholarship, established as a State Memorial to two past State Regents, the late Mrs. Millie Schiurring and Margaret Hosty, at the 33rd Biennial State Convention of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas held in Corpus Christi...

Cheerleader finalists in tryouts held were Becky Benge, Karen Rucka, Leslie Harrison, Rachelle

Hunt, Laurie Bubela, Lisa Parker, Sue Perdue, Bertie Garcia and Stacey Holden...

Carl W. Seaholm, Jr., announced the opening of Seaholm Photo Service at 707S. McCarty in Eagle Lake...

Five Eagle Lake Community Hospital Auxiliary members received service pins at the fourth annual luncheon held April 22. They were Mildred Kemper, 100-hour pin; Viola Zboril, 2500-hour pin; Annie Margaret White, 3000-hour pin; and Hattie Mae Dromgoole and Louvenia Chavis, each received 1500-hour pins...

Eighteen young feeder pigs owned by Johnny Burns of Eagle Lake and kept at a location on FM 102 west of the city were stolen.

May 8, 1958
Williard Etheridge of Tulso Midway School near Corpus Christi was appointed as the new Eagle Lake High School Principal after the resignation of Gayle G. Grant...

Donald Waddell of Rock Island was the only Colorado County man in the draft call to report on May 7 for

induction into the Armed Services...

Raymond H. Waddell was elected president of the Eagle Lake Lions Club for the 1958-59 year. He will succeed R.L. Clipson...

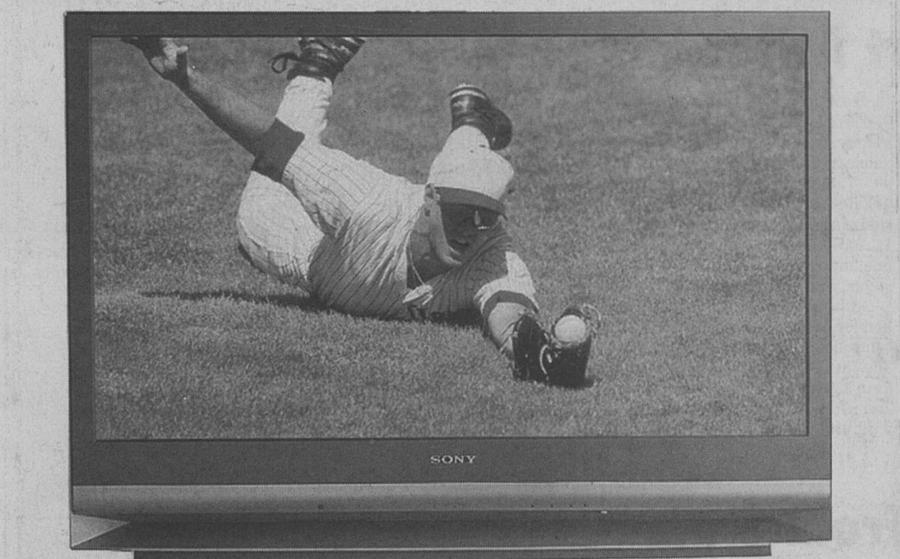
Mr. and Mrs. I.P. Simmons of Eagle Lake announced the engagement of their daughter, Judy Rebecca, to Shellie Earl Hearrean, son of Mr. and Mrs. H.C. Hearrean of Kilgore. They plan a July 18 wedding...

E.H. Stienke was elected president of Garwood Lions Club at their regular meeting Wednesday...

Funeral services were held May 6 for Robert E. Klockman, father of A.A. Klockman of this city, who passed away in Columbus Sunday. Interment was in the Weimar Masonic Cemetery...

Eagle Lake Eagles baseball team romped to a 15 to 4 victory over the Sealy Tigers Tuesday. They wind up district on Friday when they entertain the Needville Bluejays...

Harry E. Hoffman plans to return to his position at the Gordy's Barber Shop, following a lengthy illness and recuperation at Seguin.



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Colorado County Sheriff's Report

The Colorado County Sheriff's Department reported the following calls and cases for the period ending April 13.

Friday, March 31
At 4:30 pm, Deputy Crane and Deputy Pardo responded to CR 210 and CR 230 near Weimar in reference to Criminal Mischief. On arrival, it was discovered that someone drove into the ditches causing substantial damage and ruts. Case under investigation.

At 7:30 pm, Sgt. Girndt met with a complainant at the Sheriff's Office about a child custody dispute and a complaint of child abuse. The allegation was determined to have occurred in Austin County. The complainant was referred to the Austin County Sheriff's Department to make her complaint. Case closed.

At 7:55 pm, Deputy Wilson initiated a traffic stop on Hwy 90A and CR 2152. After further investigation, Eduardo Rosales, 18 of Weimar, was arrested for No Driver's License. Case closed.

At 10:55 pm, Deputy Wilson initiated a traffic stop on Hwy 90A near the Colorado River Bridge. After further investigation, Carlos Jose Hernandez, 19 of LaGrange, was arrested for

Driving While License Invalid. Case closed.

Saturday, April 1
At 7:30 am, Deputy Hudson responded to the Motor Coach RV park in reference to a Theft. The complainant reported that someone stole a flag from the flagpole. Case under investigation.

At 5:54 pm, Deputy Mieth spoke with a complainant in reference to Felony Theft that occurred at N&J Services located on Hwy 90 east of Columbus. The missing property description was entered into the State and National database as stolen. A description of the suspect vehicle was obtained and the suspect(s) are being developed. Case pending.

At 7:18 pm, Deputy Staff responded to an assault call on McGrew Lane near Altair. On arrival, it was determined that the assault took place in Brazoria and Wharton Counties. The information was taken and the case was referred to the appropriate law enforcement agencies for further action.

Sunday, April 2
At 8:30 am, Deputy Pflughaupt responded to a residence on Center Street in Alleyton in reference to a stolen vehicle. After an investigation, it was learned that the suspect was allowed use of the vehicle, which he had not yet returned. The complainant was informed that the incident was a civil matter. Case closed with no charges.

At 3:45 pm, Deputy Hudson responded to a residence in Alleyton in reference to a disturbance. After an investigation, it was determined that the disturbance was verbal only and no criminal offense occurred. Case closed.

Monday, April 3
At 8 am, Deputy Argo responded to Rice High School in reference to an incident involving improper photography or visual recording. After an investigation, the school district handled the disciplinary action and no criminal charges were filed on request of the complainant. Case closed.

At 10:04 pm, Deputy Staff responded to a residence on Townsend Street in Garwood in reference to a civil matter. During the investigation, it was determined that an assault occurred. After the investigation, Mark Dewayne Guthrie, 17 of Garwood, and Frankie Lynette Guthrie, 18 of Garwood, were arrested and charged

with Family Violence Assault, Class C Misdemeanor. Case closed.

Tuesday, April 4
At 3:10 pm, Deputy Pflughaupt responded to Yett Street in New Town for a report of Criminal Mischief. The complainant reported that his wife had caused damage to his vehicle. No charges will be filed at this time. Case closed.

At 11:11 pm, Deputy Staff responded to Hwy 71 south near the airport in reference to an abandoned vehicle blocking the roadway. On arrival, it was discovered that the vehicle was a road hazard. The vehicle was removed and stored at Delgado's Wrecker Service. Case closed.

Wednesday, April 5
At 4:26 am, Deputy Mieth responded to Old Alleyton Road in reference to a vehicle stuck in the ditch. On arrival, the occupants were identified and the vehicle was reported stolen out of Florida. After an investigation, Kevin Barbaro Fowler, 20 of Gainesville FL, was arrested for Unauthorized Use of Vehicle. Case closed.

At 4 pm, Deputy Ferro responded to Columbus Country in reference to Marijuana found in a vehicle. The Marijuana was seized and taken to the Colorado County Sheriff's Department.

At 6:30 pm, Deputy Wilson met with a complainant about Burglary of a vehicle that occurred on Struss Lane near Columbus. After an investigation, it was discovered that a purse had been stolen and (2) two subjects were seen running from the area in the early morning hours. A report was filed and the case is pending further information.

At 8 pm, Deputy Wilson responded to a residence on Sunset Plaza Road in reference to a Burglary of a vehicle. After an investigation, it was discovered that a wallet had been stolen from the vehicle. Case under investigation.

Thursday, April 6
At 12:37 am, Deputy Thumant initiated a traffic stop on Hwy 90A near Hwy 71. After investigation, Jerry Dewayne Haun, of Three Rivers, was arrested for Driving While Intoxicated. Case closed.

At 2:45 am, Deputy Wilson responded to the IH-10 rest area near the 692-mile marker in reference to an accident. The drivers of both vehicles were issued blue forms. Case closed.



Having an \$8 billion dollar surplus in Austin is ridiculous. Let's spend that money here for a new school.

We will be able to offer a more diversified selection of classes for our children.

Property taxes are being lowered as this is written. Bring our tax dollars back home. We know what to do with surpluses. Vote Yes.

Thanks,
Jim Clipson
979-234-3443

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