



July 24, 2017

To Members of the Texas House of Representatives and the Texas Senate:

You have an opportunity to advance the principles of free enterprise, limited government, and individual liberty by stopping forced annexation.

Currently, Texas cities can annex property owners living in rural areas far away from the annexing city and impose taxes, regulations and debt on people without their consent. Folks who decided to live, work and raise their families far away from big cities and in another county are forced to become part of the big city, whether they like it or not. This is the modern-day equivalent of taxation without representation, and it happens here regularly in the Lone Star State.

Worse yet, a chief motivating factor behind the practice is financial gain. In March 2012, the Texas Municipal League, a powerful special interest group, stated as much, saying: "Most cities annex for two basic reasons: (1) to control development; and/or (2) to expand the city's tax base."

That point was reinforced by Rice University's urban professor Dr. Stephen Klineberg who stated to the Wall Street Journal that: "You can use that tax revenue [from annexation] to develop the urban core." This is not your father's annexation. Big cities are going around 4 or 5 other incorporated cities and across county lines to annex high-valued neighborhoods that have no connection with the annexing cities.

Fortunately, this special session has seen strong bills filed to stop forced annexation. These bills, while slightly different, all seek to achieve a common goal: ending forced annexation by giving affected property owners a vote in the process.

If the legislature can come together to right this terrible wrong, then you will have affirmed everything we, as Texans, stand for—we support the rights of people not the designs of government, we oppose wealth redistribution, and we believe in the right of people to have a say about where and how they live.

Thank you for reading my letter, and for serving the greatest state in the greatest country in the history of the world.

Yours respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil Gramm". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Phil Gramm  
United States Senator from Texas, 1985-2002