



April 12, 2017

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

The Texas Legislature appears to be on the verge of ending forced annexation. I want to applaud you for your work thus far and encourage you to complete the task fully to protect Texans' rights to self-determination, free association, and private property.

The reason that your leadership on this issue is so important is simple. Right now, Texans do not have the right to decide who governs them. Instead city governance is imposed upon them by people they didn't elect, to pay off debt they did not run up, and to fund programs they do not support. Forced annexation is the modern day equivalent of taxation without representation.

The fact that cities use annexation for financial gain is not in question. The Texas Municipal League, a powerful special interest group representing towns and cities, acknowledges as much. In a March 2012 study, the TML states: "Most cities annex for two basic reasons: (1) to control development; and/or (2) to expand the city's tax base." Rice University's Dr. Stephen Klineberg, a nationally respected urban planner, told the *Wall Street Journal* that "You can use that tax revenue [from annexation] to develop the urban core."

"No taxation without representation" was a central cause of the American and Texas Revolutions. Forced annexation offends and contradicts that sacred principle.

Today annexation in Texas has reached the absurdity of large cities going around three or four smaller cities to annex areas in other counties that have no common interest with the urban center, even when police departments make it clear that they do not have the capacity to provide city services to the newly annexed areas. This is a revenue grab, pure and simple, and every Texan should be outraged by it.

Fortunately, several bills in the House and Senate are making their way through the legislative process to remedy this situation. These bills, while all slightly different, would achieve a common goal—giving property owners an opportunity to vote on being annexed.

These bills affirm 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 serving the greatest state in the greatest country in the history of the world. Please stop forced annexation in Texas.

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