CENTER for PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

## POTENTIAL REVENUE SOURCES

Texas Commission on Public School Finance testimony

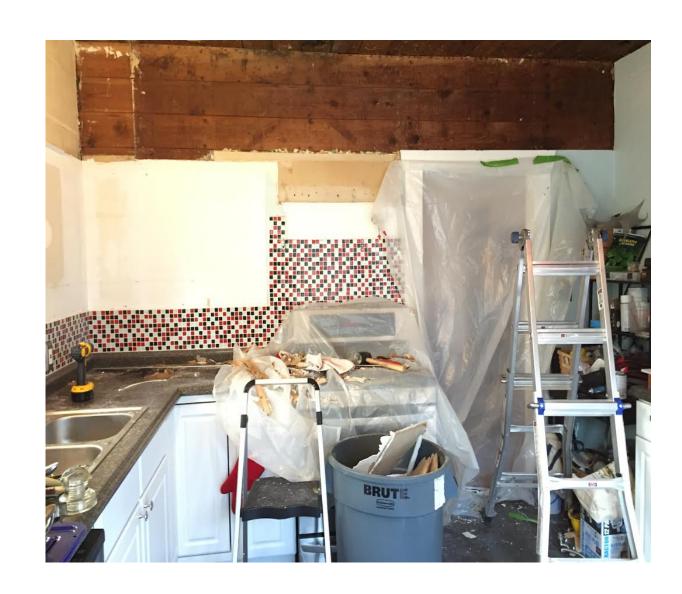
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# Our school finance system is due for some renovations!

But we need raw materials to get the job done.



## Remove outmoded or wasteful exemptions

Example: "High-cost" natural gas special treatment

- Reduces tax rate based on drilling/completion costs
- Estimated value \$368 million in 2017 (Foundation School Fund receives 25%)

1989: exemption created when natural gas industry was weak and needed incentives to undertake higher-cost operations

2018: natural gas industry now strong, due to development of fracking, shale production

=> Incentive no longer needed.

## Remove outmoded or wasteful exemptions

Another example:
Local Option Homestead Exemption (LOHE)

- Allows school districts to grant percentage homestead exemption (to 20%)
- Currently, state absorbs half of cost to Chapter 41 districts (under litigation)
- Estimated cost \$636 million in 2017

1981: property tax reform appraised all homes at full market value; exemption created to ease "sticker shock"

2018: exemption offered by fewer than 200 districts more than half of benefit goes to households >\$147,000 income

=> Rationale for exemption no longer applicable

#### **Modernize Sales Tax**

## Example: Taxation of business and professional services

- Many business and professional services are not subject to the sales tax
- Estimated value \$3.4 billion in 2017 (health care excluded)

#### **Examples:**

- Legal services \$484 million
- Architectural, engineering services \$453 million
- Accounting, auditing services \$313 million

#### **Modernize Sales Tax**

1961: sales tax created, reflecting 20th Century manufacturing economy

2018: tax fails to reflect growth in 21st Century service economy

=> Renovation needed

## Example: Alcoholic beverages taxes

- Beer: 2017 revenue \$104 million (\$6 per 31-gallon barrel)
- · Liquor: 2017 revenue \$89 million (\$2.40 per gallon)
- Wine: 2017 revenue \$16 million (20.4 cents per gallon if alcohol <14%)</li>
- Malt liquor: 2017 revenue \$15 million (19.9 cents per gallon)

If taxes increased by 50% => potential revenue - \$112 million

1984: last increase in beer, liquor, wine, malt liquor tax rates (done as part of HB 72 school reforms)

2018: no adjustment for inflation since 1984

## Another example: Gasoline/diesel tax

- Gasoline tax: 2017 revenue \$2.7 billion (20 cents per gallon)
- Diesel fuel tax: 2017 revenue \$857 million (20 cents per gallon)
- Total fuels taxes: 2017 revenue \$3.6 billion

If taxes increased by 50% => potential revenue - \$1.8 billion (Available School Fund receives 25%)

1991: last increase in gasoline, diesel tax rates (budget shortfall; *Edgewood* case response)

2018: no adjustment for inflation since 1991

#### **Data Sources**

All revenue estimates are for a one-year period

All data is from Comptroller publications:

Field Guide to the Taxes of Texas, Dec. 2017

Tax Exemptions & Tax Incidence, Feb. 2017

Sources of Revenue 1972-2016, Jan. 2017

2017 Annual Cash Report