



American Planning Association  
**Texas Chapter**

*Creating Great Communities for All*

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**Chapter Officers**

Heather Nick, AICP  
President  
903.245.4459  
[hnick@tylertexas.com](mailto:hnick@tylertexas.com)

Kelly Porter, AICP  
President-Elect  
817.392.7259  
[Kelly.kris.porter@gmail.com](mailto:Kelly.kris.porter@gmail.com)

Carol Barrett, FAICP  
Secretary  
512.731.0755  
[carolbarrett@gmail.com](mailto:carolbarrett@gmail.com)

Gary Mitchell, FAICP  
Treasurer  
281.721.4105  
[gary@kendigkeast.com](mailto:gary@kendigkeast.com)

Chance Sparks, AICP  
Past-President  
512.312.0084  
[cs@freese.com](mailto:cs@freese.com)

Rolandrea Russell  
TML Representative  
954.871.7683  
[rolandrearussell@ymail.com](mailto:rolandrearussell@ymail.com)

**Executive Administrator**

Chelsea Irby, AICP  
403 Cedar Mound Pass  
Cedar Park, Texas 78613  
254.723.4248  
[administrator@apatexas.org](mailto:administrator@apatexas.org)

APA Texas Chapter  
[www.txplanning.org](http://www.txplanning.org)

Thank you, Chairman Burns, for the opportunity to present the following information from the American Planning Association, Texas Chapter (APATX). Our Association represents public and private sector planners, planning academics and students, elected officials, and citizen planners in the great state of Texas. My name is Priscilla Rosales-Piña, and I represent the APATX. We are testifying in **opposition to HB 4275**.

This bill proposes that the emergency service district (ESD) board would determine whether the municipal services planned for the annexed territory will meet or exceed the level of service provided by the ESD in that territory. The following assessments form the basis of our opposition:

1. Current State law only allows annexation, either by election or petition by landowners. This Bill, as written, would allow ESDs to object to any type of annexation and the removal of the territory from their district, even if the property owner initiated or consented to annexation by the city.
2. One of the most important aspects of government is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its residents. Generally, larger municipal fire departments have more funding, stricter fire codes and better resources for fire and emergency medical services (EMS) when compared to emergency service districts (ESDs). In certain communities, the ESDs do not provide EMS and ambulatory services at all.
3. The Texas Department of Insurance uses the Public Protection Classification (PPC) system to grade local fire department's fire protection service, which is used to set property insurance rates. However, this proposed bill would provide all ESDs, regardless of their PPC grade with the authority to review the proposed municipal service level and determine which fire department which will serve the annexed territory. If the level of fire protection falls short, then the residents in the annexed territory suffer consequences in terms of lesser quality of fire protection services and increased home insurance rates.
4. In addition, the impact of the proposed bill would create confusion on which entity would service properties, instead of the current system of sharing responsibilities. This could also cause double taxation for property owners, if the property were annexed by the city but also serviced by the ESD.

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This bill, if enacted, would set a dangerous precedent that could impact the quality of fire protection services in the annexed territory. APATX would be interested in helping craft a bill that preserves the ability of communities to serve the needs of all Texas residents and businesses.

Respectfully submitted,

*Priscilla Rosales-Piña*

Priscilla Rosales-Piña, AICP  
APA Texas Chapter