



American Planning Association
Texas Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

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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 1204**.

This proposed bill would provide an exception to municipal authority to remove annexed land from an emergency service district's (ESD) 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. Generally, 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 in the county 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. If the level of fire protection falls short, then the residents in the annexed territory suffer the consequences in terms of a lower 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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5. This bill, if enacted, would set a dangerous precedent which would affect the quality of lives of Texas residents and businesses that need a better level of services. 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