

**Rockdale Strong! Our Voice. Our Vote.**

August 17, 2022

Senator Tonya Anderson  
PO Box 1026  
Lithonia, GA 30058-1026  
Email: [tonya.anderson@senate.ga.gov](mailto:tonya.anderson@senate.ga.gov)

Representative Rhonda Taylor  
PO Box 82452  
Conyers, GA 30013  
Email: [Rhonda.taylor@house.ga.gov](mailto:Rhonda.taylor@house.ga.gov)

**RE: Call for Legislation - Property Appraisal System**

Dear Senator Tonya Anderson and Representative Rhonda Taylor:

As you are aware, the Rockdale County Board of Commissioners (BOC) initially proposed a 2022 Millage Rate of 20.758 which would represent a 45.42% tax increase. After harsh public criticism and outcry, the BOC reduced its proposed Millage rate to 18.69. Even this would be 2 mills higher than the current rate of 16.69. If they had kept the current rate, it still would have meant a tax increase **due to the increase in property tax assessments**. Following public pressure, the BOC has also committed to reducing the proposed budget. This whole episode has further eroded the public trust in our BOC.

According to a report by data analysts at ATTOM, the average property tax bill in Georgia jumped 11% between 2020 and 2021. It's one of the biggest jumps in the nation but not a surprise when you consider that property values in Georgia jumped 43% over that same period. Metro Atlanta's average property tax bill jumped 10% between 2020 and 2021 while values increased 42%.

We believe that the root of the problem manifested, not only in Rockdale, but across the State is the BROKEN PROPERTY APPRAISAL SYSTEM. We are proposing that Legislation be created to reform this broken system and to provide taxpayers far greater protection.

There are states\* which have taken meaningful steps to protect the public with policies to provide transparency, accountability and fairness. We need our Legislature to step up to this challenge.

The current Georgia Property Taxpayer's Bill of Rights is inadequate in several respects. We ask that language be drafted for review by your Legislative Counsel. We would be happy to assist in this process. The draft should provide the following:

- The Board of Assessors would be elected by the public and charged with hiring the Chief Appraiser. As we currently operate, all these positions are County employees hired by

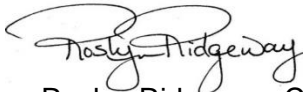
the BOC. Presently, there is no Taxpayer representation on the Board of Assessors, and they are accountable only to the State Department of Revenue.

- Limit the percentage a residential property appraisal can rise in value, for example 5% for a single-family residence
- Require that meetings of the Board of Assessors are public so that the decision-making processes are transparent. Right now, there is no transparency nor public accountability.

We regard these as minimum standards for Property Taxpayer Protections. There is much more that could be done to by the Legislature to safeguard the public and we would like to discuss these with you.

We fully understand that this is a bold request given the political realities in our State, but we must act with courage and conviction to do the right thing regardless of the politics. We will support you in that effort.

Sincerely,



Roslyn Ridgeway, Chair  
Rockdale County Democratic Party  
[chair@rockdaledems.org](mailto:chair@rockdaledems.org)

Cc: Oz Nesbitt, BOC Chairman  
Sherri Washington, Commissioner  
Doreen Williams, Commissioner

**\*Property Tax Assessment Limits Across the States**

Arizona	New Mexico
Arkansas	Oklahoma
California	Oregon
Florida	South Carolina
Iowa	Texas
Maryland	
Michigan	

**\*Property Tax Levy Limits Across the States**

Alaska	Massachusetts	Ohio
Arizona	Michigan	Oregon
Arkansas	Mississippi	Pennsylvania
Colorado	Missouri	Rhode Island
Delaware	Montana	South Dakota
Idaho	Nebraska	Texas
Illinois	Nevada	Washington
Indiana	New Jersey	West Virginia
Kentucky	New Mexico	
Louisiana	North Dakota	