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HOUSTON'S LEADING BUSINESS GROUPS COME TOGETHER TO OPPOSE PROPOSITION B

Greater Houston Partnership, Houston Realty Business Coalition, and the "C" Club of Houston Urge Houstonians to Vote AGAINST Prop B

HOUSTON (September 26, 2018) – The Houston business community respects and supports our fire fighters and police officers that risk their lives every day serving our community. When it comes to the issue of Proposition B, however, any reasonable assessment of the ballot measure shows that Prop. B puts the city's fiscal health at risk, creates an unequal compensation system and is the wrong way to ensure our first responders are fairly compensated.

On the issue of fiscal health, Bob Harvey, President and CEO of the Greater Houston Partnership said:

"The Partnership and these other business groups worked for more than three years with stakeholders from across the community to reform the City's pension plans. We cannot take a step back and waste those tremendous gains that put our City on a firmer financial footing. The City simply can't afford Prop. B – it will cost \$100 million or more in the first year. This would necessitate budget and service cuts within the General Fund budget just as pension costs were beginning to do prior to reform. Prop B would make it even harder for the City to reach a balanced budget, maintain a strong balance sheet and credit rating, and provide adequate and timely City services."

Prop B would also establish an unequal compensation system between fire and police. Alan Hassenflu, Chairman of the Houston Realty Business Coalition said:

"We agree that equal pay for equal work is essential, but Prop B. actually creates an unequal system. The "parity" component of Prop. B doesn't account for special pay categories. Police officers are required to buy their own equipment, fire fighters are not – yet they would receive the same equipment stipend. Police are required to earn certain academic degrees to progress in rank, fire fighters are not – yet they would receive the same education stipend. Prop. B also completely ignores the enormously-generous pension benefits fire fighters earn over the years which is significantly more attractive than the police plan. While Prop. B promises parity, it is anything but equal.

Finally, Prop B is simply the wrong way to address issues of compensation for city employees. Christopher Zook, President of the "C" Club said:

"We respect and appreciate our firefighters, but this city cannot afford the 32 percent pay raise the fire union is demanding if Prop B passes. We strongly encourage the city's voters to vote AGAINST Prop B, so our elected officials and the firefighters' union can re-engage in the collective bargaining process Houston voters gave the union over a decade ago – and find a more responsible, and workable, solution to ensure our firefighters are properly compensated."

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