

SB 451/HB 2551

- Part of what gives value to any home is the nature and character of the surrounding property. **There is an expectation of stability and continuity that is 'built in' to the value of a home. In fact, that's** part of the reason why many people chose the location where they live.
- People reasonably expect that they will know their neighbors and the character of their neighborhood, and that these characteristics will not change rapidly.
- Traditionally, local zoning measures have played a very important role in protecting this aspect of property value. They provide continuity that helps **protect people's investment** in their own property.
- Conversely, most people do not expect that homes in their neighborhood will be transformed into **de facto** hotels full of transient guests on a regular basis. This expectation is reasonable.
- Bills like SB451/HB2551 are a problem because they essentially use state government to exempt short-term rental properties, like those listed on Airbnb and HomeAway, from virtually all locally-based zoning, density, and usage restrictions—restrictions that are **designed to protect the quiet enjoyment of one's property in residential areas.**
- These properties often operate as **"party houses" for large groups.** On weekends—and often throughout the week—they transform quiet, family-friendly neighborhoods into all-night party zones that diminish the value and enjoyment of neighboring property.
- Often, these parties result in loud music all night, piles of garbage left in the street the next day, and restricted parking availability for residents who have lived in the neighborhood for many years. All of this clearly diminishes the value and enjoyment of property in the immediate area.
- Beyond interfering with the peace and quiet enjoyment of neighboring property, recent STR incidents have also become violent, with police having to respond to gunshots in the middle of the night. This puts neighbors and families at risk.
- Neighbors are able to call the police when an incident gets out of hand, but this is an unsustainable long-term solution because rowdy guests are transient, and change every weekend (or more frequently). Police response only addresses an immediate symptom, rather than the source, of an ongoing problem.
- This is a growing problem all over Texas, as companies like Airbnb have quadrupled their transactions in Texas over the last two years alone.
- Traditionally, these sorts of local issues have been addressed by zoning boards and local governments, spurred by concerned neighbors speaking up to protect their own property rights.

- Issues of zoning and residential restrictions are inherently local and nuanced in nature, and local leaders are in the best position to address these concerns, because they are closest to the problem.
- Unfortunately, these bills, if passed, would severely limit the ability of neighbors and local leaders to respond to such incidents in a meaningful way, via local mechanisms.
- These bills would enact a blunt **“one-size-fits-all” solution to problems** that are very local in their character. It cuts neighborhoods and local citizens out of the loop.
- This bill is also fundamentally unfair: it gives preferential treatment to a specified class of lodging operators, at the expense of property owners and other businesses.
- **STR’s** should not be given a special carve-out from local restrictions that exist to protect neighborhoods and property values.
- To protect neighborhoods and property rights, SB451/HB2551 should be defeated.