



**Dear Friends,**

**Below you will read our monthly newsletter that's filled with mostly good news! But first, please take action to stop the State Legislature from adopting a 2.5 percent cap on local property taxes. SB 2 creates a "[property tax cap](#)" that would force cities, counties, community colleges and hospital districts to hold an election any time they wanted to raise property taxes by more than 2.5 percent above the previous year's revenue. Under current law, local governments can choose to increase their property-tax revenue by up to 8 percent a year. Slashing local governments' ability to increase tax revenue from 8 percent to 2.5 percent threatens our safety net by putting public safety programs at risk. Many programs for the homeless could fade away.**

**The full Senate could take up their version of the bill, SB 2, any day, and the House is expected to take up their bill, HB 2, soon. Please contact Senate bill author and Property Tax Committee Chair Sen. Paul Bettencourt, 512-463-0107, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, 512-463-0001, House Ways & Means Committee Chair and bill author**

Rep. Dustin Burrows, 512-463-0542, and House Speaker Dennis Bonnen, 512-463-1000 and tell them you oppose this tax reduction.



ECHO Staff at the Texas Capitol on Homelessness Awareness Day

### Homelessness Awareness Day a Success!

Advocates from across Texas came to Austin on April 4<sup>th</sup> for Homelessness Awareness Day to urge legislators to take action at the Capitol. Over 100 people spoke up to our legislators about the need to provide more funding to address homelessness and to support bills to help make affordable housing more available to our neighbors experiencing homelessness.

The legislative session is not over! You still have time to make your voice heard and let your representative and senator



Ann Howard and Mayor Adler at the Press Conference for the Point in Time Count

### Point in Time Count Results

On March 26<sup>th</sup> together with Mayor Steve Adler, and Council Members Kathie Tovo,

know that ending homelessness is a priority to you. Find out who represents you [here](#) and sign up for the Texas Homeless Network advocacy alerts [here](#).

### **Social Impact Funding in Texas - Pay for Success!**

On March 28, the Austin City Council approved terms for a new funding model that will support the wrap around services needed for 250 chronically homeless individuals to maintain Permanent Supportive Housing. Private funders bear the cost on the front end and the government pays those funders back ONLY if the people remain housed and spend fewer nights in jail and hospitals. The City's commitment totals \$6 million over five years, subject to annual appropriations. ECHO has worked with Social Finance and the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) to engage the City of Austin, Travis County, Central Health and the Community Care Collaboration in the project. Both the St. David's Foundation and the Episcopal Health Foundation have committed several million dollars to the initiative. Read more about the partnership [here](#).

### **Executive Director Search**

Recently, I announced that I will step down as the ECHO Executive Director in order to campaign full-time to win the Democratic Primary nomination for Travis County Commissioner. For nearly eight years we have all worked together to build a system with the potential to end homelessness in Austin. The ECHO Board of Directors is looking for a strong candidate who can lead ECHO and this community to build on that success. Read the job description [here](#) and spread the word to any qualified candidates!

Greg Casar and Paige Ellis, we released the results of our 2019 Point in Time Count at City Hall. Surrounded by leaders working to end homelessness, we announced that youth homelessness is down by **25 percent** and **veteran homelessness is down by 15 percent.** **These reductions underscore the power of financial resources and community focus – we have funding and dedicated programs to quickly connect both groups to housing and services.** The Mayor and Council members emphasized the City's commitment to addressing homelessness and recognized the need to scale up the programs that work.

The annual count also revealed that the total number of people experiencing homelessness on that night was 2,255, which was up five percent from 2018. This increase of 108 people is disappointing, and the goal continues to be for homelessness to be rare, brief and non-recurring. We're heartened that Austin leaders from both the public and private sectors are working together and have even more resolve to invest in solutions that work to help more people end their homelessness.

Many thanks for your support,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Ann Howard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Executive Director

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