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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wernick Exposes Sommerman's Tax and Debt Record, and His Support for a Permanent Homeless Tax

District 2 candidate says voters cannot afford Sommerman's annual increases or his 19 percent hike for homeless programs, and urges a "No" vote in November

Dallas, TX - Dallas County District 2 Commissioners Court candidate Barry Wernick today laid out the tax and spending record of his Democratic opponent, Andy Sommerman, calling him "the politician who never met a tax increase he didn't love."

Wernick, the Republican nominee for District 2, says homeowners and small businesses are already carrying higher costs for housing and energy, and cannot absorb the property tax increases and county debt Sommerman has voted for since taking office in 2023.

On August 5, the Commissioners Court initially rejected a proposal to place a new permanent tax for homeless services on the November ballot. After a closed executive session, the court reversed course on a 3-2 vote and advanced the higher rate. On August 11, the court took the final vote to place the measure on the November 3 ballot. Sommerman supported the tax at both meetings. Commissioners John Wiley Price and Elba Garcia opposed it.

According to Dallas County's own Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Increase, the proposal Sommerman backed raises the tax rate from 21.55 cents to 24.865 cents per \$100 of value, an increase of 15 percent. The bill lands harder than the rate does. According to the Dallas County Appraisal District, the tax payment on the median residential homestead goes from \$559 to \$666, an increase of 107 or 19%. The Dallas Morning News reported the same rate would take the county tax on a \$350,000 home from roughly \$754 to \$886. Countywide the notice puts the added levy at more than \$208 million.

Because District 2 already carries roughly 40% of the county's total tax burden, District 2 property owners would be responsible for approximately \$60 million of this permanent new cost every year.

"At a time when residents are struggling with higher costs, for the incumbent to push a tax increase this size is callous and reckless," Wernick said. "I don't know anyone in District 2 who got a 19% pay raise last year. Yet that is roughly the increase the average homeowner is being asked to absorb. Homelessness is a serious problem and it deserves a serious answer, but there has to be a balance between the need and who pays the bill. A tax voted down in the morning and revived after a closed door meeting the same afternoon is not how you treat people's money. I stand with District 2 taxpayers, and I will join them in voting No in November."

Wernick also pointed to a pattern that began as soon as Sommerman joined the court in 2023:

- He voted for county budgets in 2023, 2024 and 2025 that resulted in higher property tax payments for homeowners and small businesses. The Dallas County annual payment on the average value home has jumped from \$629 in 2023 to \$835 in 2025, an increase of 33 percent.
- In May, without voter input or approval, he voted for \$350 million in county debt that will cost taxpayers \$688 million in principal and interest to repay — approximately \$1,300 per person in District 2, or \$2,600 if you're married.
- In April, his response to an unvetted childcare funding proposal was to call for a 14 percent increase in the county's tax rate so property taxpayers would cover it.

"The incumbent is having a love affair with your tax dollars, and District 2 pays for it every year," Wernick said. "He has backed every budget since he got there, and the bill on the average home is up more than 20 percent on his watch. That is

not a run of hard calls. That is a habit, and the bill comes to us. It is the predictable result of one-party rule with no real checks and balances. District 2 can't afford commissioners like the incumbent. Taxpayers deserve leaders who protect their wallets first."

Wernick is a mediation attorney who grew up in Dallas and lives in District 2 with his wife and daughters. He will be the county commissioner voters can afford. As District 2 County Commissioner, Barry will:

- Demand Dallas County lower its tax rate further. As property values rise, the county rides the wave of higher valuations, and tax payments climb to fund the budget without a single vote to raise the rate. Wernick will sharply lower the rate to hold the budget to no additional revenue or below the annual inflation rate.
- Cut spending on big costs where the savings are obvious, starting with electricity. Power is the county's largest utility cost at more than \$9 million a year and it has risen steadily for five years. Since 2002 the county has procured electricity through a cozy relationship with a nonprofit entity, Public Power Pool, where County Judge Clay Jenkins sits on the board. An exclusive solar energy deal with P3 is already costing more, and the most recent power contract with P3 may cost the county \$1 million beyond what it previously paid. Wernick will demand an audit of the procurement process and call for the county to invite competition for powering its 50 owned and 11 leased buildings, so taxpayers get the lowest cost for power.
- Demand transparency and accountability. Wernick is committed to full transparency in how taxpayer dollars are spent and allocated, including clear public processes and robust debate before the court takes on debt, unlike the quiet approval Sommerman gave to \$350 million in May. That also means reducing the county's reliance on closed sessions.
- Keep District 2 residents safe. The biggest expense in the county budget is criminal justice, about 40 percent of it. Drawing on his background in law and mediation, Wernick will focus on accountability in how those funds are managed, supporting programs that reduce recidivism and address mental health and substance use challenges. Public safety means working with law enforcement partners, community organizations and service providers to keep neighborhoods secure.

"Absolute power corrupts absolutely," Wernick said. "It is time for a change. My opponent is part of the One-Party Machine that has controlled Dallas County government with virtually no opposition. I am ready to replace him as the independent watchdog District 2 voters can actually afford — the one who will bring real tax and spending discipline to the court."

Press release updated August 24, 2026, to reflect proposed tax rates as amended by Dallas County.

About Barry Wernick for Dallas County Commissioner, District 2

Barry Wernick is a mediation attorney, a lifelong Dallas resident, and the Republican nominee for Dallas County Commissioner in District 2. He lives in the district with his wife and daughters. He is running to lower the county tax rate, open county contracting to competition, and hold the commissioners court accountable for how it spends and borrows. Learn more at wernickfortexas.com.