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Wernick: Dallas Can't Afford Proposition A, Andy Sommerman's 22% Homeless Tax

The Morning News endorsed it. Two Democratic commissioners voted against it. Wernick says the city audit and the results in other cities point the same way: vote no.

Dallas, Texas, October 9, 2026. Barry Wernick, the Republican nominee for Dallas County Commissioners Court, District 2, today urged voters to reject Proposition A, the property tax increase his opponent, Commissioner Andy Sommerman, moved to put on the November ballot. The Dallas Morning News has recommended that voters support it.

Proposition A would raise the county rate to 24.865 cents per $100 of value and send about $102.9 million a year to one nonprofit, Housing Forward, for homeless programs. The county's own notice says that rate is 22.02% above the no-new-revenue rate of 20.3785 cents.

"Let me ask you this: did you receive a 22% pay increase this year?" Wernick said. "I didn't. I will not vote as if you did."

What It Costs a District 2 Family

On the median homestead, with a taxable value of $268,056, Proposition A would set the county bill at $666.52. That is $107.55 more than last year's bill of $558.97 and $120.26 more than the bill at this year's no-new-revenue rate. Homes in the upper half of values would pay more than that median increase.

If Proposition A fails, the rate does not fall back to last year's. It stops at the voter-approval rate of 22.465 cents, still 10.2% over no-new-revenue.

District 2 already carries about 40% of the county property tax burden, by a tally of taxable value in District 2 precincts.

"The voters I talk with on block walks and at candidate events don't want Proposition A once they learn what it costs them," Wernick said. "They tell me housing, food and energy have all gone up and the household budget is stretched. The last thing they need is a tax hike on homes and businesses."

The Opposition Is Bipartisan

Commissioners John Wiley Price and Elba Garcia, both Democrats, voted against putting Proposition A on the ballot. Price said the county should not be the sole payer for a regional problem, and that renters would pay too because landlords pass the tax on. Garcia said a $100 million pass-through to one nonprofit that has not been vetted, with the details promised later, is not acceptable.

"I agree with them," Wernick said.

The Diligence the Court Skipped

The Morning News editorial treats Housing Forward's work downtown as a reason to lock in $100 million a year. Wernick noted that downtown had pandemic money and a city partnership behind it.

"That is not a reason to put a permanent county tax on the house," he said.

The City of Dallas Auditor's report of June 18, 2025, covered October 1, 2022, through February 29, 2024, with spending measured as of November 7, 2024. Two Housing Forward contracts, separate from the Real-Time Rehousing contract, were barely used:

- Master leasing: $52,326 spent of $3 million.
- RTR outreach: $1,707 spent of $2,354,314.

Together that is about 2% of more than $5.3 million, with about $5.3 million left unspent. The Dallas Housing Authority's separate Real-Time Rehousing contract, $31.4 million, was not evaluated.

The same audit found the Point-in-Time homeless count met 18 of 23 HUD requirements and only partly met the other five. Veteran status was not a required question, and auditors could not verify that the 2024 count happened in the required window.

"That is the record," Wernick said. "And now Housing Forward deserves $100 million plus a year, with no checks and balances written into Proposition A?"

Dedicated Homeless Taxes Have Not Delivered

Portland-area voters passed a 1% homeless tax on businesses and high-income households in 2020. Five years and $1.4 billion later, homelessness was higher than when the tax started. Last year Austin voters rejected a similar homeless property tax increase by about 63.5% to 36.5%.

"Liberal Austin said no," Wernick said.

Sommerman's Case, and the County's Own Numbers

Sommerman, the lead supporter of Proposition A, points to the cost of homelessness at the county jail and in health care. Dallas County Health and Human Services put the 2023 cost of homelessness in Dallas and Collin counties at about $194 million. Incarceration was about $17 million, roughly 9%. Hospitals and medical care were the heavy dollars.

"A pragmatic plan attacks the hospital door with measured contracts," Wernick said. "It moves paper-ready inmates to the state prison system within the 45-day window, in idle vans already sitting in the lot. It enforces against encampments and squatters. It does not invent a dedicated tax."

A Plan That Works for Everyone

Wernick, a mediation attorney, said the answer is a regional one.

"As a mediator who finds common ground, I agree with Commissioners Price and Garcia," he said. "A compassionate, effective and affordable plan must include Dallas and Collin counties, the City of Dallas, the suburban cities and the State of Texas. Proposition A is a reckless tax. Voters should reject it. We can do better and work together on a plan that is compassionate to the homeless and to taxpayers."

About Barry Wernick

Barry Wernick is an attorney, a TMCA Credentialed Distinguished Mediator and an arbitrator. He is the Republican nominee for Dallas County Commissioner, District 2, running against incumbent Commissioner Andy Sommerman. His vision for District 2, The Land of Milk and Honey, is at wernickfortexas.com/land-of-milk-and-honey.

For more information on the Barry Wernick campaign, visit WernickForTexas.com. See Andy Sommerman's record at AndySommerman.com.