

Fw: SAVE AUSTIN NOW: 10,000+ Petitions Collected (50% of Minimum Goal) // 14 Places to Sign the Audit Petition THIS WEEKEND // 22 Days to Go

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Good Saturday morning --
We have just 22 days left to collect enough petitions to qualify for the May 2026 ballot.
As of this morning, we have 10,000 petitions collected (exactly half of the minimum number required).

- Here are SIX easy ways to help RIGHT NOW:
1. EMAIL ME AND PRINT IT AT HOME: Email Matt (matt@saveaustinnow.com) and we will email the petition to you. You can then download the petition, print it, fill it out legibly and sign it (11x17 or 8.5x11), and mail it in. There are five sections for signers so we can take up to five signatures from City of Austin residents.
2. REQUEST BY MAIL: Request a mailed petition (with return postage pre-paid) here. We will mail you a petition ASAP and it will have return envelope with postage paid.
3. REQUEST BY MAIL: -32,000 petitions are being mailed TODAY. We can add you to the list here.
4. LET US OFFER OUR PETITION AT YOUR BUSINESS: We currently have TEN (!) businesses that are letting us place clipboards with petitions to sign in person on the premise. We will collect signed petitions each week. You can offer your business as an in person signing location here.
5. SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER: Here's the volunteer form, with options to help collect, help pick up, and help validate - on your own schedule.
6. DONATE TO OUR EFFORT: We need your financial support.
- Given that we have VERY limited time to do this (ten weeks), we are relying on mail as our primary collection method.
- We are mailing a cover letter, the petition (2 pages, 11x17, and an envelope with return postage paid). This costs roughly \$1.50/each. The more we mail, the faster we hit the 25,000 we need. We then must self-validate, which we do by recruiting volunteers and paying workers to do this.
- WAYS TO SUPPORT US
- You can securely contribute here.
- You can make a check to "Save Austin Now PAC" and mail it to: 807 Brazos Street Suite 306 Austin, TX 78701
- If you wish to send a wire, please email Matt.

** IN CASE YOU MISSED IT: OUR ORIGINAL ANNOUNCEMENT IS BELOW

Demand an External Affordability Audit!
Audit
Follow the Money!
www.ATXAudit.com
DONATE HERE TO OUR AUDIT CAMPAIGN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, November 21, 2025

Save Austin Now Organizes Coalition to Require an External Affordability and Efficiency Initiative Charter Amendment

Aims to Collect 25,000 Signed Petitions by Feb. 1 to Require First External Performance Audit of Entire City Budget in Austin History

AUSTIN, TX -- With a broad coalition of city leaders with them, nonpartisan Save Austin Now PAC today announced it is launching a petition effort to put a Charter amendment on the May 2026 ballot that will require an external and performance-based affordability and efficiency initiative, which must be completed within one year of the contract engagement (with the independent contractor selected within 120 days) and which must be conducted every five years or no less than one year before any future tax rate election. The Charter amendment explicitly requires that the Independent Contractor commit to identify annual or multi-year cost savings that exceed the cost of the initiative.

This effort is modeled after a successful external audit conducted by the City of Houston this year which identified more than \$120M in suggested savings and helped Houston avoid a tax rate election, unlike Austin.

We can find no example of an external performance audit of the entire city budget ever being conducted in city history. Internal audits, overseen by city officials, have been conducted for individual city departments at times in recent years. However, they have not adequately measured performance or outcomes, tracked spending and contract performance by contractors and subcontractors, or included our utilities.

This Charter amendment is being launched 17 days after Prop Q, supported by Mayor Kirk Watson and nine of ten council members (Council Member Marc Duchon was the only exception), for a 20.2% city property tax hike to produce \$110M in revenue annually to close a \$33M budget deficit for the 2025-2026 budget year. Prop Q failed 63%-37%, with more than 109,000 Austin voters opposing the tax increase.

"It is not enough that the Mayor and Council just try to restore trust they've lost from voters; the City government must be affordable, effective, and efficient," said Bill Aleshire, a local attorney and former Travis County Judge who drafted the Charter amendment language. "This Charter amendment will help achieve that."

DONATE TO FORCE THE AUDIT

"Prop Q was the people's referendum—a clear, common-sense call from Austinites who are tired of rising costs and unclear spending," said Save Austin Now co-chair Steven Brown, a lifelong East Austin resident and local Democrat. "This isn't about politics; it's about accountability. We simply want the City of Austin and our City Council to embrace an independent audit so we can finally see where we can be more efficient and make our city more affordable for the hard-working taxpayers who keep it running."

"The lesson of the Prop Q defeat is that taxpayers do not currently trust our city leaders when it comes to the city budget and city spending," said Save Austin Now co-chair Matt Mackowiak. "For trust to be restored, now and in the future, we need an external performance audit to improve affordability and efficiency, before the next budget year and then regularly afterwards. We are confident a majority of Austinites will support this common-sense approach and we hope the City Council chooses to enact this Charter amendment, but if they do not, we will pass it in May 2026."

"It is long past time the citizens of Austin are allowed to look under the hood at City Hall and see where all this money is going," said local attorney and prominent Prop Q opponent Adam Leowy. It is the only way to make sure our taxpayers dollars are being stewarded correctly."

"This external and performance-based affordability and efficiency initiative is an opportunity to analyze performance standards, legal compliance, systems, internal controls, and transparency that can result in taxpayers getting improved services at the least possible costs," said former Travis County Auditor Susan Spataro. "This initiative not only can provide assurances to Austin taxpayers, but also can be an asset for City Council and City Management to get new and improved insight and guidance in the performance of their duties in serving the people of Austin."

"I support Save Austin Now's plan to require an independent, external audit of the City's spending, with the results available to the public," said local Democrat, East Austin resident and former two-term City Council Member Ora Houston. "I am keenly aware of the need to have periodic external audits to ensure that the taxes citizens pay to the City are used efficiently and effectively. My council experience and my family history - my father had a degree in Business Administration - convince me that periodic, independent, public audits will also assure basic City services are the highest priority, the City's other priorities are clear, and the public can see that expenses match those priorities."

"Surely the Austin City Councilmember's realize that with Prop Q going down 63% to 37% that it truly was a vote of NO confidence from the City of Austin taxpayers in how the City Council understands its ability to produce a budget that the citizens are willing to accept," said former Travis County Commissioner (Precinct 3) Gerald Daugherty. "Therefore, this City Council must support an outside audit to simply show that they are serious about trying to gain back any confidence of legitimate fiscal management for this city and if they are really serious, they'll adopt a 5 year "Sunset Provision" from this point forward!"

"This is a common-sense Charter Amendment," said former Austin City Council Member Brewster McCracken. "It will ensure that city leaders have the best information to be good stewards of taxpayer funds. It will also ensure that the people of Austin have access to independent information on how their money is being spent. I was pretty surprised when the Council put Proposition Q on the ballot. I was even more surprised by the revelations that a majority of the council was extensively using one-time funds to pay for ongoing expenses and masking that from the public. These all represented big departures from how Austin city government had handled funding gaps in the past. That's why I voted no on Proposition Q. I want the Austin City Council to be successful. This Charter amendment is a necessary corrective to restore fiscal best practices and accountability. That's why I'm supporting it."

The petition can be found here. Only City of Austin residents can sign the petition and be counted.

DONATE NOW

More information, opportunities to donate, and a volunteer sign up page are available at SaveAustinNow.com.

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HELP US FIGHT FOR TAXPAYERS

Ways to support us:

- 1. You can SUPPORT our campaign with a secure donation made here.
2. You can mail a check made out to "Save Austin Now" and mail it to:

Save Austin Now
807 Brazos Street
Suite 306
Austin, TX 78701

- 3. For wire instructions, please email matt@saveaustinnow.com.

If you have questions, please reply to this email and we will reply as quickly as we can.

As we have said before, WE HAVE ONLY BEGUN TO FIGHT!

THANK YOU.

-Matt & Steven

Pol. ad. paid for by Save Austin Now PAC, Leland Bickers, Treasurer. SaveAustinNowPAC.com

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