

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1602
By: Madden
Elections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Under current law, the Texas Ethics Commission is prohibited from posting any candidate's or specific-purpose committee's campaign contribution and expenditure report on the Internet until the reports of all candidates or specific purpose committees associated with a particular ballot decision have been received. Thus, if one candidate is delinquent in turning in a particular the report, none of the reports for that office are posted on the web. This reduces public access to and timely disclosure of campaign finance information, the goals which initially prompted implementation of the electronic filing and reporting system. House Bill 1602 would authorize the Texas Ethics Commission to post reports on the web once that agency has received reports by candidates or specific-purpose committees of the two major parties.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

House Bill 1602 amends the Election Code by requiring the Texas Ethics Commission (commission) to make available to the public on the Internet electronic reports of political contributions and expenditures (reports) for each candidate or specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing only one candidate (committee) for a particular office that is nominated by or seeking the nomination of a political party required to nominate candidates by primary election (major political party) if each candidate or committee for a major political party has filed a report for that reporting deadline, rather than prohibiting the commission from posting the reports until all candidates or committees have filed a report for that reporting deadline.

The bill requires the commission to clearly state on the Internet website which reports filed by an independent candidate, a third-party candidate, or a specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing an independent or third-party candidate will not be available if the candidate or committee has not yet filed a report.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2003. The provisions in the bill only apply to the posting of reports required to be filed with the Texas Ethics Commission on or after January 1, 2004.