

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 350  
By: Hochberg  
Elections  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Under current law, during the last nine days prior to an election, candidates and political committees who accept contributions or make expenditures over certain amounts are required to file reports of this activity with the Texas Ethics Commission. These reports, known as telegram reports, only require essential information, which, to save time and effort, do not need to be submitted on an official Ethics Commission form. During the 78th legislature, changes were made to require all other contribution and expenditure reports to be filed electronically with the Texas Ethics Commission. The telegram reports were inadvertently omitted from this requirement and are the only reports not currently required to be filed electronically. House Bill 350 requires these reports to comply with the current electronic filing requirements, consistent with all other reports.

### **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 350 amends the Election Code by requiring that reports of certain contributions and expenditures, which are submitted to the Texas Ethics Commission (commission) within nine days of an election, be filed electronically. The bill requires these reports to be received by, rather than filed with, the commission not later than 5 p.m. of the first business day after the date the contribution is accepted or 48 hours after the expenditure is made. The bill changes the name of these reports from telegram reports to special reports near an election.

The bill exempts filers who affirm that they do not use computer equipment from the electronic filing requirement and who submit an affidavit to that effect with the special report. The bill provides that those filers who have previously filed an affidavit with the commission stating their exemption from electronic filing are not required to submit an additional affidavit with the special report.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

October 1, 2005.