

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1739
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Public Health
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In January 2006, the Vital Statistics Unit (VSU) of the Texas Department of Health Services (TDHS) implemented an electronic death registration system. Of the 185,000 deaths reported annually in Texas, 1 to 1.5% are now filed electronically. The statutory time for filing a death certificate is ten days. In reality, however, the average time from date of death until filing by the state is 33 days.

Death certificates are traditionally filed by a local registrar who then submits the record of VSU via mail for filing at the state level. This is entirely a manual process.

Once a record is filed by VSU, the processing time varies depending on how the request is received. They are able to fulfill requests significantly faster for electronically filed death certificates than those filed locally.

Requiring the electronic filing of death certificate information would speed up the reporting process and greatly increase the efficiency and accuracy of death records.

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

CSHB 1739 requires the person completing the medical certification to submit that information using an electronic process approved by the state registrar.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2007.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

CSHB 1739 adds a new SECTION 1 that provides that a person (funeral director) who is in charge of the interment or in charge of the removal of a body from a registration district shall file the certificate for disposition of the body electronically as specified by the state registrar.