

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2622
By: Ortiz, Jr.
Transportation
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

When the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) legislation was first passed in 1977, all board members were eligible to receive compensation of \$50 per meeting for up to 5 meetings per month. In 1981 amendments to the MTA legislation included a provision eliminating the \$50 per meeting compensation for MTA boards in cities of less than 600,000 in population. At that time, the only MTA affected by the provision was Capital Metro in Austin. In 1985, the Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority (CCRTA) was established. Because its population was in the "less than 600,000" category, it fell within the prohibition applicable to Austin. Board members at San Antonio's VIA and Houston Metro continue to receive this compensation.

Although the cost of health insurance and other benefits continue to escalate, substantial savings can be obtained through group plans. While some CCRTA board members are eligible for health coverage and other benefits through their employers, other board members do not have access to these benefits. It is good public policy for MTA boards to be comprised of persons from all walks of life, with varying backgrounds and expertise, including at least one person who represents the interests of the transportation disadvantaged, as specifically required by the Transportation Code.

In lieu of providing actual compensation for CCRTA board members on the same basis as their counterparts in San Antonio and Houston, CCRTA requests the legislative authority to provide health coverage and other employee benefits for board members on the same basis as for CCRTA employees generally. Providing these benefits will help retain good board members and provide them a benefit for their public service comparable to the \$50 per meeting payment applicable at other MTAs.

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

HB 2622 amends Section 451.519 of the Transportation Code by adding Subsection (d), which would allow a board member of a municipal authority with a population of less than 300,000 to participate in any health or other insurance benefit program offered to an employee of the authority as if the board member were an employee.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2007.