

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1420
By: Wentworth
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Students deserve education about the Internet. While the Internet clearly offers substantial benefits, it is also a source of danger and temptation. It is responsible for the State to address its obligation to teach its youth how to approach the Internet.

The purpose of the bill is to establish at the Texas Education Agency a list of resources concerning Internet safety including the potential dangers and consequences of cyber-plagiarism and allowing personal information to appear on an Internet website, the significance of copyright laws and the consequences of theft on the Internet, and to make available this information to school districts.

Intellectual property industries, which may rely on copyright or patent protection to generate revenue, employ and compensate workers that are among the most important growth drivers in the U.S. economy. These industries contributed nearly 40% of the growth achieved by all private industry and nearly 60% of the growth of U.S. exportable products, according to the Institute for Policy Innovation (IPI) a non-profit, non-partisan public policy think tank.

Damage from motion picture piracy (theft) far exceeds losses to just the movie industry. \$20.5 billion is lost in annual output to all U.S. industries, and 141,030 jobs are lost, as examples of the impact.

This bill takes into account that the segment of our population most likely to engage in illegal peer-to-peer filesharing of music and movies are 18-24 year olds. When confronted by college administrators, it is revealed that most of these young people did not know peer-to-peer filesharing of copyrighted material is illegal. The legislation is intended to provide resources to teach younger students in public schools about copyright laws and what constitutes theft, and the consequences of film and music piracy.

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

The bill provides that the Texas Education Agency shall develop and make available to school districts a list of resources concerning Internet safety, including a list of organizations and Internet websites that may assist in educating teachers and students about: the potential dangers of allowing personal information to appear on an Internet website; the significance of copyright laws; and the consequences of cyber-plagiarism and theft of audiovisual works, including motion pictures, software, and sound recordings, through uploading and downloading files on the Internet.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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