

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 2242
By: Zaffirini
Elections
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

A statewide electronic filing initiative would contribute to efficient and uniform disclosure and allow a local governing body with whom candidates are required to file campaign finance reports to voluntarily use the Texas Ethics Commission's software to increase transparency in local elections and strengthen public confidence in government.

S.B. 2242 authorizes the commission to allow the use of its software and resources by certain local governmental entities and individuals and to assist in the reporting of political contributions and expenditures made in connection with offices of and measures proposed by such entities and individuals.

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

S.B. 2242 amends the Government Code to set forth the legislative purpose of furthering the objective of fully disclosing information relating to political contributions and expenditures made in connection with offices of and measures proposed by local governmental entities by facilitating the filing of reports of such political contributions and expenditures required by state election laws.

S.B. 2242 authorizes the Texas Ethics Commission, to fulfill this purpose and to facilitate the filing of such reports of political contributions and political expenditures, to allow the use of the commission's software and resources by a local governmental entity; a local government officer; a candidate for an office of a local governmental entity; or a specific-purpose committee for supporting or opposing a candidate for an office of a local governmental entity, assisting a local government officer, or supporting or opposing a measure proposed by a local governmental entity. The bill authorizes the commission to provide assistance to such entities or individuals by developing software to facilitate electronic filing of reports of political contributions and expenditures, maintaining such reports for electronic publishing and filing, and providing public access through the commission's Internet website to electronic reports of political contributions and expenditures filed by those entities or individuals. The bill authorizes the commission to enter into an intergovernmental contract with a local governmental entity to provide that assistance.

S.B. 2242 defines "local governmental entity," "local government officer," "measure," "political contribution," "political expenditure," and "specific-purpose committee."

S.B. 2242 specifies that this bill does not make an appropriation and that a provision in the bill that creates a new governmental program or entitlement or imposes a new duty on a governmental entity is not mandatory during a fiscal period for which the legislature has not made a specific appropriation to implement the provision.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2009.