

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 751
By: Lewis
State Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, if a number of members of a legislative standing committee constituting a quorum gathers at a location on a matter totally unrelated to committee business, the activity could be construed as a violation of open meetings law, which mandates, among other things, that there be advance notification to the public of a committee meeting and that the public have access to such a meeting. However, there are circumstances, such as a caucus meeting, in which lawmakers gather for purposes other than those relating to the committee of which they are members. H.B. 751 provides that a legislative caucus meeting is not considered a meeting of a standing committee under certain provisions of law.

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

H.B. 751 amends the Government Code to provide that the attendance at a legislative caucus meeting by members of a standing committee who constitute a quorum of the committee is not considered a meeting of the standing committee under other law or under the rules of procedure for the house creating the standing committee. The bill defines "legislative caucus," for purposes of provisions of law relating to a meeting of a standing committee, to mean an organization that is composed exclusively of members of the legislature, that elects or appoints officers and recognizes identified legislators as members of the organization, and that exists for research and other support of policy development and interests that the membership hold in common, including an organization whose only nonlegislator members are the lieutenant governor or the governor.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2011.