

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 82ND LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

May 15, 2011

TO: Honorable Robert Duncan, Chair, Senate Committee on State Affairs

FROM: John S O'Brien, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB1616 by Geren (Relating to the reporting or providing of information, including information relating to political contributions, political expenditures, and personal financial information, by public servants, political candidates and committees, and persons required to register under the lobby registration law, and to complaints filed with and the functions of the Texas Ethics Commission.), **As Engrossed**

No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would amend Election Code to make additions to the list of information that must be included on campaign finance reports filed with the Texas Ethics Commission (Commission), and changes the reporting threshold for political contributions from \$50 to \$100. The bill would also change the procedures for filing amended reports to the Commission. The bill also would amend Government Code to add information that must be provided to the Commission by those registering as lobbyists. The bill would require the Commission to use existing resources to provide after hours assistance to filers and make the direct telephone numbers of Commission staff available upon request. Finally, the bill would revise the procedures for dismissal of complaints challenging certain information in political reports made to the Commission.

The bill would require the Commission to make programming changes to the online forms and software used by the Commission. The agency reports that the implementation of these programming changes could temporarily delay the implementation of other information technology projects at the agency. It is anticipated that the increase in the reporting threshold could result in some savings due to decreased filings with the Commission. It is also anticipated that any additional costs associated with implementation of the legislation could be absorbed within existing resources.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2011.

Local Government Impact

No fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

Source Agencies: 356 Texas Ethics Commission

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