

By: Larson

H.B. No. 159

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the reimbursement of state funds used on out-of-state travel by elected officers.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subtitle B, Title 5, Government Code, is amended by adding Chapter 576 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 576. REIMBURSEMENT FOR STATE-FUNDED TRAVEL AND SECURITY

Sec. 576.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Commission" means the Texas Ethics Commission.

(2) "Elected officer" means a member of the legislature or the holder of an office of state government that is voted on statewide, including a person appointed to fill a vacancy in such an office.

Sec. 576.002. DISCLOSURE OF STATE-FUNDED TRAVEL OUTSIDE THIS STATE. (a) An elected officer who uses any state funds for transportation or security for travel outside this state shall file a disclosure with the commission. A disclosure filed under this chapter must be filed electronically.

(b) The disclosure must include:

(1) the dates on which the travel occurred;

(2) the locations where the travel occurred;

(3) the cost of the travel;

(4) the purpose of the travel; and

(5) the use to which the state-funded transportation

1 or security personnel was put.

2 Sec. 576.003. FILING DEADLINE. An elected officer shall
3 file a disclosure under this chapter not later than July 15 for
4 travel ending on or after January 1 and on or before June 30. An
5 elected officer shall file the disclosure not later than January 15
6 for travel ending on or after July 1 and on or before December 31 of
7 the previous year.

8 Sec. 576.004. COMMISSION REVIEW; REIMBURSEMENT. (a) The
9 commission shall review the disclosure not later than the 90th day
10 after the date the disclosure is filed.

11 (b) Not later than the 10th day after the date a review is
12 completed under Subsection (a), the commission shall send written
13 notice to the elected officer stating whether the commission
14 determined that the state-funded transportation or security was
15 used for official state business.

16 (c) An elected officer receiving notice under Subsection
17 (b) that the transportation or security was not used for official
18 state business shall reimburse the state for the cost of the travel
19 plus interest calculated at a rate equal to inflation.

20 SECTION 2. Section 571.061(a), Government Code, is amended
21 to read as follows:

22 (a) The commission shall administer and enforce:

23 (1) Chapters 302, 303, 305, 572, 576, and 2004;

24 (2) Subchapter C, Chapter 159, Local Government Code,
25 in connection with a county judicial officer, as defined by Section
26 159.051, Local Government Code, who elects to file a financial
27 statement with the commission;

1 (3) Title 15, Election Code; and

2 (4) Sections 2152.064 and 2155.003.

3 SECTION 3. Section 571.091(a), Government Code, is amended
4 to read as follows:

5 (a) The commission shall prepare a written opinion
6 answering the request of a person subject to any of the following
7 laws for an opinion about the application of any of these laws to
8 the person in regard to a specified existing or hypothetical
9 factual situation:

10 (1) Chapter 302;

11 (2) Chapter 303;

12 (3) Chapter 305;

13 (4) Chapter 2004;

14 (5) Chapter 572;

15 (6) Subchapter C, Chapter 159, Local Government Code,
16 as provided by Section 571.061(a)(2);

17 (7) Title 15, Election Code;

18 (8) Chapter 36, Penal Code;

19 (9) Chapter 39, Penal Code;

20 (10) Section 2152.064; ~~or~~

21 (11) Section 2155.003; or

22 (12) Chapter 576.

23 SECTION 4. The change in law made by this Act applies only
24 to travel beginning on or after September 1, 2015. Travel beginning
25 before September 1, 2015, is governed by the law in effect on the
26 date the travel began, and that law is continued in effect for that
27 purpose.

1 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.