

By: Keough

H.B. No. 317

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT  
2 relating to the creation of county databases containing information  
3 on county expenditures.

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

5 SECTION 1. This act may be cited as the Transparency in  
6 Local Government Act.

7 SECTION 2. Subchapter A, Chapter 112, Local Government  
8 Code, is amended by adding Section 112.011 to read as follows:

9 Sec. 112.011. SEARCHABLE COUNTY EXPENDITURE DATABASE. (a)  
10 This section applies to a county with a population of 45,000 or  
11 more.

12 (b) The commissioners court of a county shall establish and  
13 post on the Internet a database of county expenditures that is  
14 electronically searchable by the public except as provided by  
15 Subsection (d). The database must include:

16 (1) the amount, date, payor, and payee of  
17 expenditures; and

18 (2) a listing of county expenditures by:

19 (A) object of expense with links to the warrant  
20 or check register level; and

21 (B) to the extent maintained by county accounting  
22 systems in a reportable format, class and item levels.

23 (c) To the extent possible, the county shall present  
24 information in the database established under this section in a

1 manner that is searchable and intuitive to users. The county shall  
2 enhance and organize the presentation of the information through  
3 the use of graphical representations, such as pie charts, as the  
4 county considers appropriate. At a minimum, the database must  
5 allow users to:

6 (1) search and aggregate county funding by any element  
7 of the information;

8 (2) ascertain through a single search the total amount  
9 of county funding awarded to a person by the county; and

10 (3) download information yielded by a search of the  
11 database.

12 (d) The county may not allow public access under this  
13 section to a payee's address, except that the county may allow  
14 public access under this section to information identifying the  
15 county in which the payee is located.

16 (e) The county may not charge a fee to the public to access  
17 the database.

18 SECTION 3. Section 112.011, Local Government Code, as added  
19 by this Act, applies only to expenditures made on or after the  
20 effective date of this Act.

21 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.