

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 84TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

May 23, 2015

TO: Honorable Byron Cook, Chair, House Committee on State Affairs

FROM: Ursula Parks, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: SB19 by Taylor, Van (Relating to the ethics of public officers and employees, the disclosure of certain political contributions, and related requirements and procedures; creating criminal offenses.), **Committee Report 2nd House, Substituted**

No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would amend Government Code to increase transparency and disclosure requirements for state officers, lobbyists, and political committees. The bill would require all personal financial statements to be filed electronically with the Texas Ethics Commission (TEC) and to be searchable electronically with certain information redacted by the TEC. The bill would also create certain offenses and would alter how appeals of certain final decisions by TEC would be handled. The bill would require an ethics counselor to be designated by the Texas Legislative Counsel (TLC) to review personal financial statements and prepare ethics analysis. These costs to TEC and TLC are estimated to be absorbed within existing resources.

The bill would require TEC to award the respondent of a frivolous complaint certain costs to be paid by the filer of the complaint. The bill would allow the TEC to develop software related to its duties and would require any revenue generated from such development to be deposited into the General Revenue Fund. LBB estimates that any revenue generated would not be significant.

Under the bill, certain provisions would take effect January 1, 2016 and January 1, 2017. The bill would take effect immediately upon receiving two-thirds vote in each chamber. Otherwise, the bill would take effect September 1, 2015.

Local Government Impact

A Class A misdemeanor is punishable by a fine of not more than \$4,000, confinement in jail for a term not to exceed one year, or both. A Class B misdemeanor is punishable by a fine of not more than \$2,000, confinement in jail for a term not to exceed 180 days, or both. Costs associated with enforcement, prosecution and confinement could likely be absorbed within existing resources. Revenue gain from fines imposed and collected is not anticipated to be significant.

Source Agencies: 103 Legislative Council, 356 Texas Ethics Commission

LBB Staff: UP, AG, MW, EMo