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| BILL ANALYSIS |

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| H.B. 3956 |
| By: Geren |
| State Affairs |
| Committee Report (Unamended) |

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| **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**  Interested parties contend that when a governmental entity subpoenas a sermon delivered by a religious leader, the governmental entity is threatening the constitutional rights of religious liberty and freedom of speech. H.B. 3956 seek to address this issue by prohibiting a governmental entity from compelling the production or disclosure of a copy or recording of certain sermons in any civil or administrative proceeding to which the governmental entity is a party. |
| **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**  It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision. |
| **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. 3956 amends the Civil Practice and Remedies Code to prohibit a governmental unit from compelling the production or disclosure in any civil action or other civil or administrative proceeding to which the governmental unit is a party of a written copy or audio or video recording of a sermon delivered by a religious leader during religious worship of a religious organization that qualifies for an exemption from certain taxation under state law and from compelling the religious leader to testify regarding the sermon. |
| **EFFECTIVE DATE**  On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2017. |