

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
85R11478 BEF-F

H.B. 3047
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Business & Commerce
5/17/2017
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Interested parties contend there is confusion in the Open Meetings Act as it relates to meeting via videoconference technology. Under current statute, a governmental body conducting a meeting with one or more members participating via videoconference must recess if a member's videoconference connection is disconnected. If after six hours a connection cannot be reestablished, the meeting must be adjourned. This happens regardless of whether a quorum is present with the remaining members. H.B. 3047 amends Section 551.127, Government Code, to clarify that that if a connection is lost to a remotely participating member of a meeting, a quorum of that body may continue to meet.

H.B. 3047 amends current law relating to the meeting of a governmental body held by videoconference call.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Reenacts Section 551.127, Government Code, as amended by Chapters 159 (S.B. 984) and 685 (H.B. 2414), Acts of the 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013, and amends it, as follows:

Sec. 551.127. VIDEOCONFERENCE CALL. (a) through (a-2) Makes no changes to these subsections.

(a-3) Requires that a member of a governmental body who participates in a meeting by videoconference call be considered absent from any portion of the meeting during which the audio or video communication with the member is lost or disconnected. Authorizes the governmental body to continue the meeting only if a quorum of the body remains present at the meeting location or, if applicable, continues to participate in a meeting conducted under Subsection (c) (relating to authorizing a meeting of a certain governmental body to be held by videoconference call).

(b) through (k) Makes no changes to these subsections.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2017.