

BILL ANALYSIS

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

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.