

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2840
By: Canales
County Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been suggested that the practice of the governing bodies of certain political subdivisions to provide for public input and comment only at the conclusion of a meeting of the governing body makes it too difficult for the public to properly weigh in on decisions being made because they are forced to wait through the entire meeting to provide an opinion on any subject matter being addressed at the meeting. H.B. 2840 seeks to give the public increased access to the decision making process by providing for public comment before or during the consideration of each item on the meeting agenda.

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. 2840 amends the Government Code to require certain specified local governmental bodies to allow each member of the public who desires to address the body regarding any of its open meeting agenda items to address the body regarding the item at the meeting before or during the body's consideration of the item. The bill authorizes such a governmental body to adopt reasonable rules regarding the public's right to address the body and requires a rule that limits the amount of time that a member of the public may address the body to provide that a member who addresses the body through a translator must be given at least twice the amount of time as a member who does not require a translator, provided that the body does not use simultaneous translation equipment in a certain manner. The bill prohibits an applicable governmental body from prohibiting public criticism of the body, except for criticism that is otherwise prohibited by law.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2019.