86R8604 BRG-D

By:  Creighton S.B. No. 2329

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the authorization of expenditures for lobbying activities by certain political subdivisions and other public entities.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  Chapter 556, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 556.0056 to read as follows:

Sec. 556.0056.  USE OF PUBLIC MONEY FOR LOBBYING ACTIVITIES. (a) In this section:

(1)  "Political subdivision" means:

(A)  an appraisal district;

(B)  a regional mobility authority;

(C)  a transit authority;

(D)  a regional tollway authority;

(E)  a community college district;

(F)  a river authority;

(G)  any other political subdivision that imposes a tax;

(H)  any other political subdivision or special district that has the authority to issue bonds, including revenue bonds; or

(I)  any other special purpose district.

(2)  "Public entity" means:

(A)  an institution of higher education, as defined by Section 61.003, Education Code; or

(B)  a publicly owned utility.

(b)  Except as provided by Subsection (c), a political subdivision or a public entity may not spend public money to directly or indirectly influence or attempt to influence the outcome of any legislation pending before the legislature.

(c)  A political subdivision or a public entity may spend public money to directly or indirectly influence or attempt to influence the outcome of any legislation pending before the legislature only if the expenditure is authorized by a majority vote of the governing body of the political subdivision or public entity in an open meeting of the governing body. The expenditure must be voted on by the governing body as a stand-alone item on the agenda at the meeting.

(d)  If a political subdivision or public entity does not comply with the requirements of this section, an interested party is entitled to appropriate injunctive relief to prevent any further activity in violation of this section. For purposes of this subsection, "interested party" means a person who:

(1)  is a taxpayer of a political subdivision or public entity; or

(2)  is served by or receives services from a political subdivision or public entity.

SECTION 2.  Section 556.0056, Government Code, as added by this Act, applies only to an expenditure or payment of public money by a political subdivision or public entity that is made on or after September 1, 2019. An expenditure or payment of public money by a political subdivision or public entity that is made before September 1, 2019, is governed by the law in effect on the date the expenditure or payment is made, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 3.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.