

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the authorization and reporting 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 140, Local Government Code, is amended by adding Section 140.012 to read as follows:

Sec. 140.012. EXPENDITURES FOR LOBBYING ACTIVITIES.

(a) This section applies only to a:

(1) political subdivision that imposes a tax;

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

(3) regional mobility authority;

(4) transit authority;

(5) regional tollway authority;

(6) special purpose district;

(7) public institution of higher education;

(8) community college district;

(9) publicly owned utility; and

(10) river authority.

(b) A political subdivision or entity described by Subsection (a) may spend 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

1 majority vote of the governing body of the political subdivision or  
2 entity in an open meeting of the governing body. The expenditure  
3 must be voted on by the governing body as a stand-alone item on the  
4 agenda at the meeting.

5 (c) A political subdivision or entity described by  
6 Subsection (a) shall report to the Texas Ethics Commission and  
7 publish on the political subdivision's or entity's Internet  
8 website:

9 (1) the amount of money authorized under Subsection  
10 (b) for the purpose of directly or indirectly influencing or  
11 attempting to influence the outcome of any legislation pending  
12 before the legislature;

13 (2) the name of any person required to register under  
14 Chapter 305, Government Code, retained or employed by the political  
15 subdivision or entity for the purpose described by Subdivision (1);  
16 and

17 (3) an electronic copy of any contract for services  
18 for the purpose described by Subdivision (1) that is entered into by  
19 the political subdivision or entity with each person listed under  
20 Subdivision (2).

21 (d) In addition to the requirements of Subsection (c), a  
22 political subdivision or entity described by Subsection (a) shall  
23 report to the Texas Ethics Commission and publish on the political  
24 subdivision's or entity's Internet website the amount of public  
25 money spent for membership fees and dues of any nonprofit state  
26 association or organization of similarly situated political  
27 subdivisions or entities that directly or indirectly influences or

1 attempts to influence the outcome of any legislation pending before  
2 the legislature.

3 (e) The Texas Ethics Commission shall make available to the  
4 public an easily searchable database on the commission's Internet  
5 website containing the reports submitted to the commission under  
6 Subsection (c).

7 (f) If a political subdivision or entity described by  
8 Subsection (a) does not comply with the requirements of this  
9 section, an interested party is entitled to appropriate injunctive  
10 relief to prevent further activity in violation of this section.  
11 For purposes of this subsection, "interested party" means a person  
12 who:

13 (1) is a taxpayer of the political subdivision or  
14 entity described by Subsection (a); or

15 (2) is served by or receives services from the  
16 political subdivision or entity described by Subsection (a).

17 (g) This section does not apply to an officer or employee of  
18 a political subdivision or entity described by Subsection (a) who  
19 appears before a legislative committee at the written request of  
20 the committee or a member of the legislature and does not take a  
21 position on any legislation.

22 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.