

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 1082

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE AFFAIRS

Hearing Date: March 11, 2021 8:00 AM

Donnis Baggett, Executive Vice President

Texas Press Association

Bryan, TX

We respectfully object to the sealing of home addresses for elected officials, who are chosen by the voters and are accountable to them. Members of the public may legitimately want to know where in the district their council member lives, for example, or whether they're current on their property taxes. For that matter, the incumbent council member might want to ask the same questions about their election opponent. We understand the need to restrict access to Social Security numbers, emergency contacts and personal family information. That data can and should be protected without creating a separate class for elected officials in a nation built upon accessibility and accountability of officials.

Kelley Shannon, Executive Director

Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas

Austin, TX

These are comments "on" the bill (not for or against) for the following reason: We at the FOI Foundation oppose the sealing of home addresses for elected officials because addresses allow the public to know whether an official lives in his or her district; to track property tax payments (and non-payments) and to conduct other necessary vetting of elected officials. However, we don't oppose making Social Security numbers, emergency contacts and other personal information off limits to public view. Unfortunately, all these things are grouped in with home addresses in that section of the law and in HB 1082.

Might you consider removing "home addresses" from the list of off-limits personal information for elected officials?

Thanks for taking this point into account, and best regards.... Kelley Shannon, FOI Foundation of Texas

Claudia Russell

City of San Marcos

Austin, TX

The City of San Marcos supports and is in favor of HB 1082.