

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 540
By: Longoria
Culture, Recreation & Tourism
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Funding was appropriated to the Texas State Library Archives Commission (TSLAC) during the 86th Legislative Session for the construction of new libraries along the border due to feedback from residents, local libraries, and library associations in the area. However, current law prohibits the use of state grants for construction of public libraries across the state. This prohibition also complicates possible federal funding that may be appropriated for libraries. For example, the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program, which provided funding to support anchor institutions such as libraries, authorized federal funds to be used to cover construction projects to expand capacity such as spaces for telemedicine and computer labs. TSLAC would need additional authority for Texas to be able to direct state funds to match or support these efforts. H.B. 540 seeks to address this issue by authorizing libraries and library systems to use state grants for new construction, rehabilitation, or renovation of libraries and their infrastructure and associated expenses and by striking the prohibition against the use of state grants for construction purposes.

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. 540 amends the Government Code to make construction grants eligible for inclusion in the Texas State Library and Archives Commission's program of state grants for purposes of encouraging the establishment of new public libraries or the improvement of existing public libraries. The bill authorizes libraries and library systems to use state grants for new construction, rehabilitation, or renovation of a library or the infrastructure of a library and associated expenses.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.