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| BILL ANALYSIS |

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| C.S.H.B. 5195 |
| By: Capriglione |
| Delivery of Government Efficiency |
| Committee Report (Substituted) |

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| **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**  In December 2024, Governor Abbott launched the Small Business Freedom Council to review government efficiency for Texas businesses. The council produced a report in March 2025, identifying ways to cut unnecessary government regulations that impede small business formation and growth. Throughout the course of the Small Business Freedom Council's work, a survey of over 700 small business owners found that a top complaint and barrier to success was the difficulty many experienced in navigating outdated and inefficient state agency websites. The report also recommends that the state allow for digital submission of required notices and expand online licensing and reporting to ease the burden of reporting by small businesses to the state and that a modernization of websites would make this process easier. C.S.H.B. 5195 seeks to implement these recommendations by requiring state agencies to assess their websites for the purpose of improving services, using guidance and technical assistance provided by the Department of Information Resources. |
| **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**  C.S.H.B. 5195 amends the Government Code to require each state agency to assess its website and online service portals to identify areas for improved user accessibility, navigation, and digital service efficiency. The bill requires a state agency to consider the following in performing such assessment:   * strategies to simplify user access to forms, applications, and agency services; * opportunities to reduce or eliminate paperwork requirements if electronic alternatives exist; * enhancements to ensure compliance with accessibility standards under provisions relating to access to electronic and information resources by individuals with disabilities; * using responsive web design to ensure the agency's website is equally accessible using a desktop computer, laptop computer, or mobile device, including a tablet or cellular telephone; * adopting best practices for search functionality, page load speed, and service integration; and * using Department of Information Resources (DIR) web page templates and web design guidelines to provide consistency among state agency websites and improve the usability of the website.   The bill requires DIR to provide guidance and technical assistance for use by state agencies in standardizing agency modernization planning efforts required by the bill.  C.S.H.B. 5195 requires DIR to develop and disseminate best practices for user-centered design, digital accessibility, and service integration, including web page templates and web design guidelines that provide a consistent look for state agency websites and simplify user navigation. The bill defines "user-centered design" as a design approach focused on optimizing the user experience by improving website navigation, accessibility, and responsiveness.  C.S.H.B. 5195 authorizes DIR to establish a working group of state agency technology officers to facilitate information sharing and support consistency across agencies. Additionally, the bill requires DIR, not later than November 15, 2026, to submit a report to the legislature detailing the status of the state agency digital modernization planning efforts required by the bill's provisions and identifying common priorities and challenges. The bill's provisions relating to legislative reporting expire January 1, 2027. |
| **EFFECTIVE DATE**  September 1, 2025. |
| **COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE**  While C.S.H.B. 5195 may differ from the introduced in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.  While both the introduced and the substitute require each state agency to assess the agency's website and online service portals to identify areas for improvement in user accessibility, navigation, and digital service efficiency, the introduced required an agency to implement updates to accomplish certain actions, while the substitute requires a state agency to consider certain factors in performing the required assessment. Those actions and factors differ as follows:   * whereas the introduced included the action of simplifying the process for users to access forms, applications, and agency services, the substitute includes strategies to simplify user access to forms, applications, and agency services as a factor for the agency to consider; * whereas the introduced included the action of removing unnecessary paperwork requirements where digital alternatives exist, the substitute includes opportunities to reduce or eliminate paperwork requirements if electronic alternatives exist as a factor for the agency to consider; * whereas the introduced included the action of ensuring compliance with accessibility standards under statutory provisions relating to exceptions for state agencies for significant difficulty or expense in complying with standards, the substitute includes enhancements to ensure compliance with accessibility standards under statutory provisions relating to access to electronic and information resources by individuals with disabilities as a factor for the agency to consider; * whereas the introduced included the action of improving website responsiveness for mobile and desktop users, the substitute includes using responsive web design to ensure the agency's website is equally accessible using a desktop computer, laptop computer, or mobile device, including a tablet or cellular telephone, as a factor for the agency to consider; and * the substitute includes using DIR's web page templates and web design guidelines to provide consistency among state agency websites and improve the website's usability as a factor for the agency to consider, whereas the introduced did not include such an action.   The substitute omits the following provisions present in the introduced:   * the requirement for DIR to develop statewide guidance for agencies to standardize modernization efforts and ensure inter-agency consistency; * provisions requiring a state agency to review its existing forms, applications, and public filing requirements to identify paperwork requirements that can be eliminated or replaced with digital submissions, processes that can be automated to reduce manual data entry by users, and alternative means to verify information without requiring duplicative documentation from the user; * the requirement for each agency to submit a report to the Legislative Budget Board and the governor's office by December 1 of each even-numbered year detailing the steps taken to modernize agency processes and reduce paperwork; * the requirement for the State Auditor's Office to review agency compliance with modernization requirements as part of routine audits; and * provisions requiring each agency to complete an internal assessment of its website and digital service offerings and to submit a modernization plan to DIR not later than September 1, 2026.   While both the introduced and the substitute establish provisions relating to interagency guidance and support, those provisions differ as follows:   * whereas the introduced required DIR to provide technical assistance to agencies to implement website improvements and digital service upgrades, the substitute requires DIR to provide guidance and technical assistance for use by state agencies in standardizing agency modernization planning efforts required under the bill's provisions; * whereas the introduced required DIR to establish guidelines for user-centered design that prioritize ease of navigation, multilingual access, and mobile-friendly design, the substitute requires DIR to develop and disseminate best practices for user-centered design, digital accessibility, and service integration, including web page templates and web design guidelines that provide a consistent look for state agency websites and simplify user navigation; and * whereas the introduced required DIR to coordinate a working group of agency technology officers to share best practices and address modernization challenges, the substitute authorizes DIR to establish such a working group to facilitate information sharing and support consistency across agencies.   While both the introduced and the substitute include provisions requiring DIR to submit a report to the legislature detailing the status of the digital modernization efforts, the provisions differ as follows:   * whereas the introduced required the report to be submitted by March 1, 2027, the substitute requires the report to be submitted not later than November 15, 2026; * the substitute includes in the elements included in the report common priorities and challenges in the modernization efforts, whereas such language was absent from the introduced; and * the substitute includes a provision absent from the introduced establishing that the bill's provisions regarding legislative reporting expire January 1, 2027.   The substitute includes a definition of "user-centered design" absent from the introduced. |
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