

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 4157
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Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The bill author has informed the committee that with the increasing presence of commercial space flight in Texas, updates to the state's liability standards are necessary to harmonize state and federal standards and allow Texas to remain competitive in the space flight industry. H.B. 4157 seeks to address these inconsistencies by updating current waiver requirements for space flights and establishing the validity of federal reciprocal waivers under state statute.

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. 4157 amends the Civil Practice and Remedies Code to remove from the definition of "space flight participant" for purposes of provisions relating to limited liability for space flight activities the specification that such an individual is not crew. The bill removes the condition that an agreement required to be signed by a space flight participant before participating in any space flight activity also be signed by a competent witness to be considered effective and enforceable. The bill establishes that a reciprocal waiver of claims between parties engaged in space flight activities under the Federal Aviation Regulations is effective and enforceable in Texas, including a waiver by a contractor, subcontractor, or customer of any party participating in a space flight activity.

H.B. 4157 applies only to a cause of action that accrues on or after the bill's effective date. A cause of action that accrues before the bill's effective date is governed by the law applicable to the cause of action immediately before that date, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.