

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 5032
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Economic Development
5/9/2025
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) serves as the steward of the state's most sacred founding documents: the Texas Declaration of Independence, the Texas Constitution, and the "Victory or Death" letter written by Lt. Col. William Barret Travis on February 24, 1836.

H.B. 5032 would require TSLAC, in collaboration with State Preservation Board (SPB) and the Texas Historical Commission (THC), to develop a plan to display the Texas Constitution and the Texas Declaration of Independence in the Capitol Complex. The bill would also require the victory or death letter to be displayed at the Capitol Complex with those documents until an appropriate place in the Alamo complex is designated for the display of that letter. The bill requires TSLAC to pay the costs attributable to the display of those documents using available funds or funds appropriated to TSLAC for that purpose.

All Texans should have the opportunity to view these historic documents in a safe and secure public setting. The planning and execution of this public display should be a coordinated effort among TSLAC, SPB, and THC.

H.B. 5032 amends current law relating to the display of certain historical state documents.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter L, Chapter 441, Government Code, by adding Sections 441.206 and 441.207, as follows:

Sec. 441.206. DISPLAY OF CERTAIN HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS IN CAPITOL COMPLEX. (a) Requires the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC), in consultation and collaboration with the State Preservation Board (SPB) and the Texas Historical Commission (THC), to designate an appropriate place in the Capitol Complex to securely display the Texas Constitution and the Texas Declaration of Independence.

(b) Requires TSLAC to pay the costs attributable to the display of the Texas Constitution and the Texas Declaration of Independence using available funds or funds appropriated to TSLAC for that purpose.

(c) Requires TSLAC, in consultation and collaboration with SPB and THC and not later than December 1, 2027, to develop a plan to display in the Capitol Complex the Texas Declaration of Independence and the Texas Constitution, publish the plan on TSLAC's Internet website, and provide a copy of the plan to the standing committees of the legislature with jurisdiction over the state's historical resources.

(d) Provides that Subsection (c) and this subsection expire September 1, 2031.

(e) Authorizes TSLAC, in consultation and collaboration with SPB and THC, to authorize for a limited period the display of the Texas Constitution or the Texas Declaration of Independence at a historical event or historical site.

Sec. 441.207. CARE, CUSTODY, AND DISPLAY OF VICTORY OR DEATH LETTER. (a) Defines "victory or death letter."

(b) Provides that TSLAC, in consultation and collaboration with SPB and THC, is responsible for the care and custody of the victory or death letter.

(c) Requires TSLAC to designate an appropriate place in the Alamo complex to securely display the victory or death letter.

(d) Requires TSLAC, until TSLAC designates an appropriate place in the Alamo complex to display the victory or death letter and determines an appropriate time to securely transfer the letter to that place, to display the victory or death letter at the Capitol Complex with other historical documents, including the Texas Constitution and Texas Declaration of Independence.

(e) Requires that costs attributable to the display of the victory or death letter under Subsection (c) or (d) be paid by money from the Alamo complex account and provides that they are an authorized use of the money under Section 31.454(e) (relating to authorizing the general land office to use money in the Alamo complex account to administer certain functions of the Alamo complex or acquire a historical item appropriate to the complex), Natural Resources Code.

(f) Authorizes TSLAC, in consultation and collaboration with SPB and THC, to authorize for a limited period the display of the victory or death letter at a historical event or historical site.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2025.