

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.S.B. 710
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Intergovernmental Affairs
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The bill sponsor has informed the committee that municipal boards, commissions, and other similar entities, such as a municipal zoning commission, often do not have a way to post information for the public to review before their public meetings, making it difficult for the public to fully participate in the meeting and for the media to report on the proceedings. However, the bill sponsor has informed the committee that there are many who believe that allowing these municipal entities to use online message boards in the same manner that governmental bodies use them, as is expressly authorized under state open meetings law, would serve to alleviate these difficulties. C.S.S.B. 710 seeks to address this issue by authorizing a city council to allow municipal boards, commissions, and similar entities to utilize an online message board.

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.S.B. 710 amends the Government Code to authorize the governing body of a municipality by ordinance or resolution to authorize each board, commission, or similar entity of the municipality to establish and use an online message board or similar Internet application for the purposes of a written electronic communications system accessible to the public. The bill authorizes a governing body adopting such an ordinance or resolution to authorize use of the online message board or similar Internet application for a period of not longer than two years and to reauthorize use of the message board or application in the same manner and for the same period as many times as the governing body determines is appropriate. The governing body may rescind an ordinance or resolution adopted under the bill's provisions at any time.

C.S.S.B. 710 establishes that an online message board or similar Internet application authorized under the bill's provisions is separate from and in addition to a municipal online message board or similar Internet application authorized by provisions under state open meetings law related to written electronic communications. The use and administration of an online message board or similar Internet application authorized by the bill's provisions must comply with the requirements of such state open meetings law.

C.S.S.B. 710 requires a municipal governing body that authorizes use of an online message board or similar Internet application under the bill's provisions to require a municipal employee

to monitor the message board or application for compliance with the bill's provisions and state open meetings law related to written electronic communications.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.

COMPARISON OF SENATE ENGROSSED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.S.B. 710 may differ from the engrossed in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the engrossed and committee substitute versions of the bill.

Whereas the engrossed limited the applicability of its provisions to a municipal zoning commission or other entity organized under applicable state law relating to municipal zoning authorities, the substitute makes its provisions applicable to each board, commission, or similar entity of a municipality.