

By: Harris, Metcalf, Raymond

H.B. No. 1397

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the care, custody, and display of the letter known as the victory or death letter, the Texas Constitution, and the Texas Declaration of Independence.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter L, Chapter 441, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 441.207 to read as follows:

Sec. 441.207. CARE, CUSTODY, AND DISPLAY OF VICTORY OR DEATH LETTER, TEXAS CONSTITUTION, AND TEXAS DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. (a) In this section, "victory or death letter" means the letter written by Lieutenant Colonel William B. Travis dated February 24, 1836, and signed "Victory or Death."

(b) The commission is responsible for the care and custody of the victory or death letter, the Texas Constitution, and the Texas Declaration of Independence.

(c) The commission shall:

(1) designate an appropriate place in the Alamo complex for the secure display of the victory or death letter; and

(2) on the Texas Historical Commission's determination that the transfer to and display of the letter at the Alamo complex is safe and appropriate, transfer the letter to that location for display.

(d) Until the commission designates an appropriate place in the Alamo complex to display the victory or death letter and in

1 collaboration with the Texas Historical Commission determines an
2 appropriate time to securely transfer the letter to that place, the
3 commission shall display the victory or death letter in the public
4 location at the Capitol Complex at which the Texas Constitution and
5 the Texas Declaration of Independence are displayed as required by
6 Subsection (e).

7 (e) The commission shall collaborate with the Texas
8 Historical Commission and State Preservation Board to determine an
9 appropriate public location at the Capitol Complex for the secure
10 display of the Texas Constitution and the Texas Declaration of
11 Independence.

12 (e-1) The commission, in consultation and collaboration
13 with the Texas Historical Commission and the State Preservation
14 Board and not later than December 1, 2027, shall:

15 (1) develop a plan to display in the Capitol Complex
16 the Texas Declaration of Independence and the Texas Constitution;

17 (2) publish the plan on the commission's Internet
18 website; and

19 (3) provide a copy of the plan to the standing
20 committees of the legislature with jurisdiction over the state's
21 historical resources.

22 (e-2) Subsection (e-1) and this subsection expire September
23 1, 2031.

24 (f) The commission, in consultation and collaboration with
25 the Texas Historical Commission and the State Preservation Board,
26 may authorize for a limited period the display of the Texas
27 Constitution, the Texas Declaration of Independence, or the victory

1 or death letter at a historical event or historical site.

2 (g) Costs attributable to the display of the victory or
3 death letter, the Texas Constitution, and the Texas Declaration of
4 Independence shall be paid by the commission, using money available
5 to the commission for that purpose.

6 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.