

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. Chapter 443, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 443.031 to read as follows:

Sec. 443.031. 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 board is responsible for the care and custody of the victory or death letter, the Texas Constitution, and the Texas Declaration of Independence. The board is responsible for the safety and preservation of the victory or death letter at all times, including when the letter is in the direct custody of the board, in storage, or on display in the Alamo complex, Capitol Complex, or another site the board determines appropriate under Subsection (f).

(c) The board, in consultation with the Texas Historical Commission and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, shall:

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

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

5 (d) Until the board designates an appropriate place in the
6 Alamo complex to display the victory or death letter and in
7 collaboration with the Texas Historical Commission and the Texas
8 State Library and Archives Commission determines an appropriate
9 time to securely transfer the letter to that place, the board, in
10 consultation with the Texas Historical Commission and the Texas
11 State Library and Archives Commission, shall display the victory or
12 death letter in the public location at the Capitol Complex at which
13 the Texas Constitution and the Texas Declaration of Independence
14 are displayed as required by Subsection (e).

15 (e) The board shall collaborate with the Texas Historical
16 Commission and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission to
17 determine an appropriate public location at the Capitol Complex for
18 the secure display of the Texas Constitution and the Texas
19 Declaration of Independence.

20 (e-1) The board, in consultation and collaboration with the
21 Texas Historical Commission and the Texas State Library and
22 Archives Commission and not later than December 1, 2027, shall:

23 (1) develop a plan to display:

24 (A) the Texas Declaration of Independence and the
25 Texas Constitution in the Capitol Complex; and

26 (B) the victory or death letter in the Alamo
27 complex and other sites the board determines appropriate under

1 Subsection (f);

2 (2) publish the plan on the board's Internet website;
3 and

4 (3) provide a copy of the plan to the standing
5 committees of the legislature with jurisdiction over the state's
6 historical resources.

7 (e-2) Subsection (e-1) and this subsection expire September
8 1, 2031.

9 (f) The board, in consultation and collaboration with the
10 Texas Historical Commission and the Texas State Library and
11 Archives Commission, may authorize for a limited period the display
12 of the Texas Constitution, the Texas Declaration of Independence,
13 or the victory or death letter at a museum, historical event, or
14 historical site.

15 (g) Costs attributable to the display of the victory or
16 death letter, the Texas Constitution, and the Texas Declaration of
17 Independence shall be paid by the board, using money available to
18 the board for that purpose.

19 SECTION 2. On the day the Texas Constitution, the Texas
20 Declaration of Independence, and the letter described by Section
21 443.031(a), Government Code, as added by this Act, are to be
22 displayed at the Capitol Complex, as provided by Sections
23 443.031(d) and (e), Government Code, as added by this Act, the Texas
24 State Library and Archives Commission shall transfer to the State
25 Preservation Board the Texas Constitution, the Texas Declaration of
26 Independence, and the letter described by Section 443.031(a),
27 Government Code, as added by this Act.

H.B. No. 1397

1 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.

H.B. No. 1397

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1397 was passed by the House on April 30, 2025, by the following vote: Yeas 143, Nays 0, 1 present, not voting; and that the House concurred in Senate amendments to H.B. No. 1397 on May 29, 2025, by the following vote: Yeas 141, Nays 0, 1 present, not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1397 was passed by the Senate, with amendments, on May 23, 2025, by the following vote: Yeas 29, Nays 2.

Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: _____

Date

Governor