

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 89TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 18, 2025

TO: Honorable Will Metcalf, Chair, House Committee on Culture, Recreation & Tourism

FROM: Jerry McGinty, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB1397 by Harris (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.), **Committee Report 1st House, Substituted**

There would be an indeterminate cost to the state dependent on the specific parameters and type of encasements used to house the three historical documents outlined in the bill.

This bill would designate the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) as responsible for the care and custody of the Victory or Death letter, the Texas Constitution, and the Texas Declaration of Independence. It would require TSLAC to designate an appropriate place in the Alamo complex for the secure display of the Victory or Death letter, and coordinate with the Historical Commission on the transfer of the letter to the Alamo complex. TSLAC would be required to collaborate with the Historical Commission to determine an appropriate public location in the capitol complex to display the Texas Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and until the appropriate time to transfer it to the Alamo complex, the Victory or Death letter. Costs attributable to the display of the three documents would be paid by TSLAC.

According to TSLAC, research conducted with the National Institute of Science and Technology concluded that total costs to display all three documents in a public location could range between \$1,819,245 and \$3,063,350 for fiscal year 2026. This would include three state of the art encasements made with a double layer of tempered glass, sealing the documents in argon gas with precise sensors, a frame machined from a solid metal block, and sealed together with a tin and nickel alloy. Each encasement is estimated to cost between \$473,415 and \$888,117. The encasements would be housed in three formal exhibit cases (approximately \$33,000 per case), and installed at the determined location (approximately \$100,000 per case). The exact parameters of the encasements would be primarily dependent on the condition of the documents they house, and as such, the fiscal impact cannot be determined at this time.

Local Government Impact

No significant fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

Source Agencies: 305 General Land Office and Veterans' Land Board, 306 Library & Archives Commission, 808 Historical Commission, 809 Preservation Board

LBB Staff: JMc, TUf, LCO, CSmi, NV, MW, JDio