

SUBJECT: Enforcement of fair housing laws

COMMITTEE: Urban Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 6 ayes — Hill, Conley, Bailey, Ehrhardt, Thompson, Tillery

2 nays — Staples, Woolley

1 absent — Davila

WITNESSES: For — None

Against — None

On — Henry Flores

DIGEST: HB 1457 would require the community affairs division of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs to periodically report to the state attorney general information on violations of federal fair housing laws in government-subsidized housing. The department would be required to review fair-housing law violations and the methods used by the federal government to remedy racial desegregation relating to subsidized housing and the effectiveness of those methods.

The attorney general's office would be required to forward the information to the appropriate federal authorities and recommend to them ways to effectively increase the enforcement of fair housing laws in the state.

SUPPORTERS SAY: HB 1457 would initiate a clear process for improving the enforcement of federal fair housing laws in Texas public housing. Federal fair housing laws prohibit discrimination and declare as a national policy that fair housing should be provided in the United States and constitutional rights guarded. Texas should do everything it can to make sure that all of its citizens are protected by federal law. This bill would ensure that local policies are scrutinized and that violations are properly reported.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

The Texas Commission on Human Rights already has the responsibility for investigating and resolving complaints to enforce the state's own Fair Housing Act. This bill proposes unnecessary bureaucracy and paperwork for two other state agencies, at an additional expense of state funds, to duplicate enforcement efforts that are already required and interject themselves into the operations of the human rights commission.