

SUBJECT: Continuing the Texas Commission on the Arts

COMMITTEE: State, Federal and International Relations — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 6 ayes — B. Hunter, Dukes, Elkins, Rhodes, Rusling, Serna
0 nays
3 absent — Price, Eiland, Reyna

SENATE VOTE: On second reading, February 21 — 30-0

WITNESSES: For — James D. Tittle, chairman, Texas Commission on the Arts; Connie Ware, Marshall Regional Arts Council; Gilberto Zepeda Jr., commissioner, Texas Commission on the Arts; Richard Huff, Dr. Francine Carraro, Texas Fine Arts Association
Against — None
On — John Paul Batiste, executive director, Texas Commission on the Arts

BACKGROUND: The Texas Fine Arts Commission, created in 1965 by the 59th Legislature, was renamed the Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA) in 1979. The mission of the TCA is to preserve and develop the arts and cultural industries, expand artistic opportunities, conserve Texas' rich artistic heritage and encourage the use of the arts in education.

For fiscal 1994-95, the commission's budget was \$8.2 million, which included \$6.7 million in state general revenue and \$1.5 million from the National Endowment for the Arts. TCA awards grants on a competitive basis to nonprofit arts organizations. It also provides program support services such as information to the public, the arts community and government agencies, a listing of museums, art centers and artist organizations, grant-writing workshops for artists and arts organizations and technical and advisory services.

The commission is subject to the Sunset Act and will be abolished on September 1, 1995, unless continued by the Legislature.

DIGEST: SB 360 would continue the Texas Commission on the Arts until September 1, 2007, and make statutory modifications recommended by the Sunset Advisory Commission. The bill would require that at least two of the 18 commission members be from counties with less than 50,000 residents. It would authorize a voluntary hearings process state agencies can use to review the costs and benefits of whether to set-aside a portion of construction costs for art. The commission would be required to develop formal agreements with other state agencies regarding the role of the arts in public education, state music and film promotion, and tourism.

The bill would also include standard sunset provisions on gubernatorial designation of the commission chair, conflict of interest, employee career ladder, performance evaluation, equal employment opportunity, standards of conduct and other areas.

The bill would take effect September 1, 1995.

SUPPORTERS SAY: SB 360 would continue the Texas Commission on the Arts with a few modifications recommended by the Sunset Advisory Commission to strengthen the commission's role in promoting the arts and enhance its responsiveness to public needs. TCA has established a program to address the need for services to rural communities, but the commission has relatively few members with a perspective on the needs of rural areas. By requiring that at least two of the 18 commission members be from rural counties, the bill would ensure that rural points of view are heard. The Texas Department of Transportation and the Texas Department of Commerce have similar requirements.

The development of the Texas art industry continues to be an important function that stimulates economic development in the state and contributes significantly to the state's prosperity. In 1993 the impact of the arts in payroll expenditures in Texas was estimated by the TCA to be more than \$575 million. Arts programs are often a major contributor to many downtown and community revitalization efforts.

More than 60,000 jobs for artists, teachers, craftspersons and other skilled workers are available in Texas through the arts. As of March 1994 about 825 artists were employed through TCA-funded projects.

Financing is a major need for many artists and art organizations. In 1993 TCA received more than 1,300 applications requesting a total of more than \$18.3 million in grant funds. However, the commission was only able to provide grants to approximately half of the applicants with the \$3.4 million available.

The agency has enhanced education through art. More than 79,000 school-age children have participated in commission-supported arts education programs. The programs, which fund artists to work in public educational settings, improve the learning environment in schools.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

No apparent opposition

NOTES:

SB 767 by Montford, which would make the promotion of the arts by the state self-supporting by establishing the Texas cultural endowment fund financed by a 1 percent surcharge on the purchase of cultural services, tickets and related items to be used for the promotion of the arts in Texas, has been referred to the Senate Finance Committee.