

- SUBJECT:** Expanding TexShare academic library consortium to public libraries
- COMMITTEE:** State, Federal and International Relations — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — Hunter, Berman, Chavez, Elkins, Isett, C. Jones, Madden, Juan Solis
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — P. Moreno
- WITNESSES:** For — James Stewart, Texas Library Association
- Against — None
- On — Robert Martin, Texas State Library and Archives
- BACKGROUND:** TexShare is a consortium for academic libraries at all institutions of higher education, including community colleges, independent higher education institutions, and health science centers, allowing members to share access to electronic information resources. TexShare spends most of its appropriation on electronic subscriptions. Other components of the program include a courier service to promote interlibrary sharing; the TexTreasure program, which issues grants to make lesser-known collections available for users; and the TexShare Card, which allows patrons of participating libraries to borrow materials from other member libraries.
- DIGEST:** HB 1433 would add public libraries that are members of the state library system to the TexShare consortium. The Texas State Library and Archives Commission would phase in the expansion to include public libraries only to the extent that it could be done efficiently with the appropriations made to the commission and only in a manner that did not reduce services to academic libraries.
- The bill would increase the TexShare advisory board by two members, also requiring that two board members to be affiliated with a public library, and eliminate the position of board secretary. The bill would exempt a library or resource-sharing program operated by the Texas State Library and Archives

Commission from requirements that purchases be made by the General Services Commission and also exempt subscriptions to electronic databases and information products.

The bill would take effect September 1, 1999.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

The TexShare program has been very successful in providing access to a vast array of electronic library resources, including journals, technical reports, subscriptions, and databases. It also helps promote joint purchasing and licensing agreements involving digital information resources for members. HB 1433 would expand the TexShare network from academic and state libraries to public libraries. This means small rural libraries would have some of the same research and information advantages as large university or city libraries.

The cost of all library materials, especially subscriptions to academic journals, continues to rise. Smaller libraries, hampered by tight budgets and lack of staff, have much to gain through this program. The expansion of TexShare services also would give these libraries access to all other TexShare library's resources, including a courier service to promote interlibrary sharing.

Expanding the TexShare program to public libraries would be done in phases so that existing services to academic libraries would not be diluted. The authorization for adding public libraries to the system should be done now, but the commission can determine how quickly to make the transition to an expanded program that can most effectively include all public libraries.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

Expanding the TexShare program further to hundreds to public libraries, even if phased in, may be too much too soon. The TexShare program received a larger budget last session, expanded its services, shifted its administration from the Higher Education Coordinating Board to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, and tripled its membership, adding 100 new community colleges and private universities only last year. It may be wise to keep TexShare services at their current level to give the system time to prove itself before diluting its resources.

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NOTES: The companion bill, SB 692 by Lucio, was reported favorably, without amendment, by the Senate Education Committee on April 6 and recommended for the Local and Uncontested Calendar.