

SUBJECT: Providing information to the Legislature

COMMITTEE: State Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 11 ayes — Wolens, Counts, Craddick, Danburg, Hilbert, Hunter, D. Jones, Longoria, Marchant, McCall, Merritt

0 nays

4 absent — S. Turner, Alvarado, Bailey, Brimer

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 8 — 30-0

WITNESSES: (*On House companion bill, HB 3153:*)
For — None

Against — None

On — Steve Collins, Texas Legislative Council

BACKGROUND: Under current law, members of the Legislature may receive one copy of any public information requested from a state agency free of charge.

DIGEST: SB 1367 would allow an agency or committee of the Legislature to receive one copy of public information requested from a state agency without charge. It would allow the Texas Legislative Council (TLC) to gather and analyze public education and other public service information in order to conduct statistical and demographic research and produce reports. State agencies would be required to cooperate with TLC to the maximum extent permitted by state or federal law.

SB 1367 would allow TLC to request voter turnout information from the secretary of state, city election officials, or county election officials. TLC also could receive appraisal records maintained in electronic format by an appraisal district without charge in the format requested by TLC no later than 30 days after the appraisal district received a written request from TLC. This bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house.

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SUPPORTERS SAY: The Texas Legislative Council is required to conduct investigations and studies at the direction of the Legislature. SB 1347 would clarify the authority of TLC to obtain information on behalf of the Legislature in the same manner as individual members of the Legislature. The bill also would clarify the responsibilities of appraisal districts when TLC requests information from them. Placing these requirements in statute would help ensure that TLC and other legislative agencies receive the cooperation they need to compile the data that the Legislature needs to consider the potential implications of its decisions.

OPPONENTS SAY: No apparent opposition

NOTES: The companion bill, HB 3153 by Wolens, was left pending in the House State Affairs Committee.