

- SUBJECT:** Appropriating fees generated through increasing lobby registration fees
- COMMITTEE:** Appropriations — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 24 ayes — Heflin, Luna, Berman, Branch, B. Brown, F. Brown, J. Davis, Deshotel, Eiland, Hamric, Hope, Hupp, Isett, E. Jones, Kolkhorst, Menendez, Pickett, Pitts, Raymond, Solis, Stick, Truitt, S. Turner, Wohlgemuth
- 0 nays
- 5 absent — Crownover, Dukes, Ellis, Gutierrez, McClendon
- WITNESSES:** No public hearing
- BACKGROUND:** The 78th Legislature during its regular session enacted HB 1606 by Wolens, the Texas Ethics Commission (TEC) sunset bill, which revised ethics and campaign-finance laws pertaining to most state and local candidates, officeholders, and lobbyists. The bill authorized the TEC to increase lobby registration fees in 2004 and 2005 in order to develop and implement an electronic filing system for lobbyists. The fee increases will expire January 1, 2006.
- Generally, when pending legislation would generate fee revenue, lawmakers adopt a contingency rider in the general appropriations act giving direction to appropriate the funds if the bill becomes law and the fees are generated. HB 1 by Heflin, the general appropriations act for fiscal 2004-05, contains no contingency rider for HB 1606.
- DIGEST:** HB 29 would appropriate to TEC fees collected during fiscal 2004-05 from any additional revenue generated by the increase in the lobby registration fees, beginning September 1, 2003, for the purpose of the development and implementation of the electronic filing system for lobbyists. The amount could not exceed \$267,400. Any future increases in the cost of state employee benefits connected with administration of HB 1606 would have to be paid by the fee-generated funds.

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The bill would take effect immediately if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect on the 91st day after the last day of the third called session.

**NOTES:**

The fiscal note for HB 29 estimates a general revenue cost of \$263,000 in fiscal 2004-05. Estimated fee collections in HB 1606 are \$215,000 in fiscal 2004 and \$48,000 in fiscal 2005.