

SUBJECT: Requiring TEA to develop Internet safety resources for school districts

COMMITTEE: Public Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 5 ayes — Eissler, Zedler, Branch, Olivo, Patrick
1 nay — Hochberg
3 absent — Delisi, Dutton, Mowery

WITNESSES: For — Jeffrey Clark, American Electronics Association; (*Registered, but did not testify*): Portia Bosse, Texas State Teachers Association; Ramiro Canales, Texas Association of School Administrators; MerryLynn Gerstenschlager, Texas Eagle Forum; Thomas Ratliff, Microsoft
Against — None

DIGEST: CSHB 3171 would require the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to develop and make available to school districts a list of resources concerning Internet safety, including a list of web sites that could educate teachers and students about:

- the potential dangers of allowing personal information on a web site;
- the significance of copyright laws ; and
- the consequences of cyber-plagiarism and theft of audio-visual works, including motion pictures, software, and sound recordings, through uploading and downloading files on the Internet.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2007.

SUPPORTERS SAY: CSHB 3171 would help school districts teach students about the importance of copyright protection in our nation's economy by requiring TEA to develop and make available resources about this topic. Intellectual property industries, such as film and music, rely on copyright or patent protection to generate revenue. They employ and compensate workers who are among the most important growth drivers in the U.S. economy. In

addition, the effects of motion picture piracy have consequences beyond losses experienced by the movie industry. Annually, film piracy results in a loss of \$20.5 million in output to all U.S. industries, including 141,030 jobs.

The bill would not require schools to teach students about Internet safety and piracy. TEA simply would have to make the information available to schools that wished to do so.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

TEA should not be required to develop and make available materials that primarily are intended to protect the motion picture industry. If that industry wishes to inform young people about the dangers of piracy, it should do so through other means. Schools already are struggling to meet curriculum and testing requirements and should not use scarce time and resources for this effort.

NOTES:

The companion bill, SB 1420 by Wentworth, passed the Senate on the Local and Uncontested Calendar on April 26 and has been referred to the House Public Education Committee.