

SUBJECT: Repealing certain legislative oversight committees

COMMITTEE: State Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — Cook, Frullo, Geren, Harless, Hilderbran, Huberty, Oliveira, Solomons, Turner

0 nays

4 absent — Menendez, Craddick, Gallego, Smithee

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, March 17 — 31-0

WITNESSES: None

BACKGROUND: Ch. 1801 of the Insurance Code governs the Property and Casualty Insurance Legislative Oversight Committee. The committee is required to meet with the insurance commissioner annually to review rules and legislation proposed by the Department of Insurance and to monitor property and casualty insurance regulation reform and market conduct. The committee is required to submit a biennial report to the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the speaker containing regulation reform analyses and legislative recommendations to address problems caused by regulation reform.

Sec. 39.907 of the Utilities Code governs the Electric Utility Restructuring Legislative Oversight Committee. The committee is required to meet at least annually to review legislation recommendations and monitor the effectiveness of electric utility restructuring. The committee also is required to submit a biennial report to the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the speaker detailing its activities, an analysis of electric utility restructuring problems, and legislative recommendations to address those problems.

Ch. 65, subch. F of the Utilities Code governs the Telecommunications Competitiveness Legislative Oversight Committee and its monitoring of the effectiveness of telecommunications deregulation. The committee is required to conduct joint public hearings with the Public Utility

Commission at least once yearly and receive information relating to telecommunications deregulation. The committee also is required to submit a biennial report to the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the speaker detailing its activities, as well as to provide an analysis of telecommunications deregulation issues and legislative recommendations to address those issues.

Sec. 3.01, ch. 626 of the Acts of the 73rd Legislature created the Edwards Aquifer Legislative Oversight Committee to oversee and review the Edwards Aquifer Authority and the South Central Texas Water Advisory Committee. The committee's jurisdiction includes oversight of federal law compliance for threatened and endangered species, water pollution control, and soil and water conservation districts and river authorities in the Edwards Aquifer region.

DIGEST: SB 781 would repeal the statutory authorization for the legislative oversight committees for property and casualty insurance regulation, electric utility restructuring, telecommunications competitiveness, and the Edwards Aquifer.

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, 2011.

SUPPORTERS SAY: SB 781 would abolish unnecessary and nonfunctioning legislative oversight committees. Since these committees do not fulfill their biennial reporting obligations and do not meet as mandated, they serve no purpose to the Legislature. Furthermore, the authority of existing standing committees in the House and the Senate would address any issues under the jurisdiction of these oversight committees.

OPPONENTS SAY: No apparent opposition.