

**SUBJECT:** Allowing certain officials to submit financial ethics statements by mail

**COMMITTEE:** General Investigating and Ethics — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 7 ayes — S. Davis, Moody, Capriglione, Nevárez, Price, Shine, Turner  
0 nays

**WITNESSES:** For — Dave Jones, Clean Elections Texas; (*Registered, but did not testify:*  
Joanne Richards, Common Ground for Texans; Lon Burnam, Dan Eckam)

Against — None

**BACKGROUND:** Government Code, sec. 572.021 requires state officers, which includes state officials appointed by the governor, to submit a verified personal financial statement to the Texas Ethics Commission.

HB 3683 by Geren, as enacted by the 84th Legislature in 2015, under sec. 572.0291, requires this statement to be submitted electronically, in accordance with rules set by the commission.

**DIGEST:** HB 791 would allow an official appointed by the governor before December 31, 2016, to file with the Texas Ethics Commission a required financial statement by certified mail if the individual did not have access to the internet at home or did not own a computer.

This 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, 2017.

**SUPPORTERS SAY:** HB 791 would allow certain individuals in public service without access to the internet or a computer to be grandfathered in to the electronic filing requirement for financial statements to the Texas Ethics Commission. The enactment of HB 3683 by Geren in 2015 meant that appointees currently serving are now required to submit financial statements electronically that previously they could have submitted by certified mail. This bill would

allow those individuals to file financial statements in a convenient way that would not be overly burdensome.

OPPONENTS  
SAY:

No apparent opposition.