

SUBJECT: Requiring certain political subdivisions to post specific information online

COMMITTEE: State Affairs — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 13 ayes — Phelan, Hernandez, Deshotel, Guerra, Harless, Holland,
Hunter, P. King, Parker, Raymond, E. Rodriguez, Smithee, Springer

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: James Lennon, Kingwood TEA
Party; Terry Harper, RPT; Cary Cheshire, Texans for Fiscal
Responsibility; Donnis Baggett, Texas Press Association)

Against — None

On — Mark Ramsey, Republican Party of Texas, SREC SD7

BACKGROUND: Government Code ch. 551 requires governmental bodies to give written
notices of upcoming meetings and to keep minutes or make a recording of
each open meeting.

DIGEST: CSHB 305 would require certain political subdivisions to post online
information regarding elections and meetings.

The bill would apply to political subdivisions that have the authority to
impose a tax and that maintained a publicly accessible website on or after
January 1, 2019.

The bill would require such a subdivision to post on a publicly available
website:

- its contact information;
- each elected officer;
- each candidate for elected office;
- the date and location of the next election for officers;
- the requirements and deadlines for filing for candidacy of each

elected office, continuously posted for at least one year before the election day for that office;

- each notice of a meeting; and
- each record of a meeting.

This bill would take effect on September 1, 2019, and would apply only to meetings held on or after that date.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHB 305 would create greater transparency regarding meetings and elections for political subdivisions that have the authority to tax by requiring them to post information online.

Special districts with taxing power need to be held to the same democratic standards as the rest of government, and citizens subject to the decisions of these bodies should have the ability to keep informed of their activities, to participate in their decision-making process, and to run for their offices.

Because the bill would apply only to districts that already had a public website, it would not impose an inappropriate burden on them.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No concerns identified.