

SUBJECT: Revising certain political reporting requirements

COMMITTEE: State Affairs — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 9 ayes — Hunter, Hernandez, Anchía, Dean, Metcalf, Slawson, Smithee, Spiller, Turner

0 nays

4 absent — Geren, Guillen, Raymond, S. Thompson

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Susan Stewart)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Katie Naranjo, Travis County Democratic Party; Valarie Gold; Veronica Maples; Samantha McDaniel; Luke Squires; Calvin Tillman)

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: JR Johnson, Texas Ethics Commission; Shawn Hall Lecuona, The Voice of Justice and of Consanguinity; Teresa Weirich)

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that campaign finance reporting requirements should be amended to facilitate more efficient disclosure and transparency.

DIGEST: CSHB 1585 would establish that a communication supporting or opposing legislation filed by a member of the Legislature was considered political advertising for the purposes of campaign finance regulations if it appeared to express support or opposition of the member or person who supported or opposed the legislation.

The bill would revise the prohibition on a candidate knowingly accepting campaign contributions or making a campaign expenditure at a time when a campaign treasurer appointment for the candidate was not in effect to apply only to contributions and expenditures over \$500.

The bill would repeal provisions requiring a political recordkeeping report filed with the Texas Ethics Commission to include the amount, date, and contributor name of each political contribution made electronically and accepted by the person or committee required to file the report. The bill also would revise the requirement that such a report include the name of each candidate or officeholder who benefited from a campaign expenditure to instead require that the report include the name of each candidate or officeholder for whom a campaign expenditure was made to support or oppose.

Provisions requiring a report to include political expenditures made with a credit card to be reported in a single itemized list with certain data would be repealed.

The bill would require the Texas Ethics Commission to adjust dollar amount reporting thresholds for laws administered and enforced by the commission every 10 years, rather than annually, based on the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers.

CSHB 1585 would specify that the election of the speaker of the House of Representatives was included in the statutory definition of "legislation."

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023, and would apply only to a report filed or an adjustment made on or after that date.