

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 308
By: Wentworth
State Affairs
3-3-97
As Filed

DIGEST

The Texas Open Meetings Act was enacted in 1976 as part of a national trend to make government more accessible to the people. A fundamental premise of the statute is that all meetings of governmental bodies are open to the public unless otherwise specified. While it is commonly accepted that the act applies to a regular or called meeting of a governmental body, it is unclear whether or not the act applies to informal meetings such as staff briefings. S.B. 308 expands the definition of a meeting to ensure compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 308 provides for the application of the open meetings law to certain meetings of governmental bodies.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 551.001(4), Government Code, to provide that the definition of "meeting" includes a situation in which the governmental body has four or more members, a gathering at which a quorum of members of the governmental body is present and at which the members receive information from, give information to, ask questions of, or receive questions from any third person, including an employee of the governmental body, about the public business or public policy over which the governmental body has supervision or control.

SECTION 2. Repealer: Section 551.075, Government Code (Conference With Employees; Closed Meeting).

SECTION 3. Emergency clause.
Effective date: upon passage.