

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
80R9355 CAE-D

H.B. 1237  
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State Affairs  
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Engrossed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

The Texas Supreme Court has recognized and reiterated that the express purpose of the Public Information Act (PIA) is to give the public information about the affairs of government and the official acts of public officials and employees.

The State Bar of Texas (state bar) is an administrative agency of the judicial branch in Texas. The PIA specifically excludes the judiciary, including records maintained for the judiciary, from its provisions. The state bar holds the personal identifying information of licensed attorneys for the judiciary. The State Bar Act requires that certain information be easily accessible to the public. The state bar regularly receives requests for all information about individual attorneys that encompass personal identifying information. The release of personal information potentially subjects attorneys, including current and former state and federal judges and prosecutors, and their family members to harm relating to their personal safety or possible identity theft.

H.B. 1237 clarifies current law to provide that a licensed attorney may choose to restrict public access to the attorney's home address, home telephone number, email address, Social Security number, and date of birth.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

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

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 552, Government Code, by adding Section 552.1176, as follows:

Sec. 552.1176. CONFIDENTIALITY OF CERTAIN INFORMATION MAINTAINED BY STATE BAR. (a) Provides that information that relates to the home address, home telephone number, electronic mail address, social security number, or date of birth of a person licensed to practice law in this state is confidential and is prohibited from being disclosed to the public under this chapter if the person to whom the information relates chooses to restrict public access to the information, and notifies the State Bar of Texas of the person's choice, in writing or electronically, on a form provided by the state bar.

(b) Provides that a choice made under Subsection (a) remains valid until rescinded in writing or electronically by the person.

(c) Provides that all documents filed with a county clerk and all documents filed with a district clerk are exempt from this section.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2007.