

SUBJECT: Allowing legislative agencies to donate used computer equipment

COMMITTEE: State Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 10 ayes — Wolens, Carter, Craddick, Danburg, Hilbert, Hunter, Longoria, McCall, Ramsay, Stiles

0 nays

5 absent — S. Turner, Alvarado, Brimer, Counts, D. Jones

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 10 — 31-0

WITNESSES: None

BACKGROUND : Current law authorizes the General Services Commission (GSC) to donate surplus and salvage equipment of state agencies to various nonprofit organizations, including schools. The commission has no jurisdiction over the disposition of property of either house of the Legislature.

DIGEST: SB 996 would require legislative agencies to develop a system for disposing of surplus or salvage property. The system would have to give preference to transferring the property directly, in order of priority, to a public school, another public governmental agency or an assistance organization.

The bill would stipulate that the law governing GSC donation of surplus and salvage property would not apply to legislative agencies.

SB 996 would take immediate effect if finally approved by a two-thirds record vote of the membership in each house.

SUPPORTERS SAY: SB 996 would provide a direct means by which the Legislature and its associated agencies could support technology education in Texas public schools. The bill would apply to the Legislative Council, Legislative Budget Board, Legislative Reference Library and State Auditor's Office, all of which regularly update computer and other high-technology equipment. The pace of innovation in high tech means that equipment even a few years old has little resale value. Although the Legislative Council has been able to

persuade vendors to accept outdated computers in trade for new computers, it does not receive much of a discount for the used equipment apart from the convenience of having the old computers hauled away.

Nevertheless, computer equipment with little market value retains a substantial useful life. Used computer equipment is highly valued by public schools for teaching computer skills and is a necessary component of the state's goal to increase distance learning capabilities and Internet access among public schools in Texas. Allowing legislative agencies to donate used computers to schools and other worthwhile organizations would speed this process and implement a recommendation by the Senate Committee on Administration's Report on Technology to the 75th Legislature.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

No apparent opposition.