

- SUBJECT:** Training requirements for newly appointed chief appraisers
- COMMITTEE:** Local Government Ways and Means — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 5 ayes — Hill, Hamilton, Laubenberg, Puente, Quintanilla
0 nays
2 absent — Elkins, Uresti
- WITNESSES:** For — Michael Amezquita, Bexar Appraisal District Chief Appraiser, Texas Association of Appraisal Districts; Jim Robinson, Texas Association of Appraisal Districts; Buddy Winn
Against — None
- BACKGROUND:** Under Occupations Code, sec. 1151.103, the Board of Tax Professional Examiners may establish standards of professional practice, conduct, education, and ethics for appraisers, assessors, and collectors. Sec. 1151.160 provides that "registered professional appraiser" is the highest level of certification established by the board for a person engaged in appraisal. The rules of the board establishing minimum requirements must require that a person registered as an appraiser become certified as a registered professional appraiser not later than the fifth anniversary of the date of the person's original registration with the board.
- Tax Code sec. 5.04 requires the comptroller to consult with the board in setting standards for and approving curricula and materials for use in training and educating appraisers and assessor-collectors. An appraisal district must reimburse an employee of the appraisal office, with the approval of a chief appraiser, for expenses, tuition and fees, and costs of materials for attending a course or training program sponsored or approved by the board.
- DIGEST:** HB 2382 would require the Board of Tax Professional Examiners to implement a required training program for newly appointed chief appraisers and to prescribe the curriculum specified. The training program would have to provide the appointee with information regarding:

- the Property Tax Code;
- the role and functions of the board;
- the programs operated by the board;
- the rules of the board, with an emphasis on rules that relate to ethics;
- the role and functions of the chief appraiser, the appraisal district board of directors, and the appraisal review board;
- the importance of an appraisal office's maintaining independence from political pressure;
- the importance of prompt and courteous treatment of the public;
- the finance and budgeting requirements for an appraisal district, including appropriate controls to ensure proper expenditures; and
- the requirements of the open meetings act (Government Code, Chapter 551), the public information act (Government Code, Chapter 552), the administrative procedure act (Government Code, Chapter 2001), and other laws relating to public officials, including conflict-of-interest laws, and the standards of ethics imposed by the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP).

The board, or a provider approved by the board, would offer the training.

HB 2382 also would amend the Tax Code to require that a person serving as a chief appraiser would have to complete the training course described in this bill. A person could serve in a temporary, provisional, or interim capacity as chief appraiser for up to one year without completing the required training. The bill would not apply to a county assessor-collector who served as chief appraiser pursuant to a contract.

The board would have to implement the training program not later than January 1, 2006. A person would not be required to complete the training to serve as a chief appraiser until July 1, 2006. The requirements would apply only to a chief appraiser in a temporary, provisional, or interim capacity appointed on or after July 1, 2006.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2005.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 2382 would require statutorily that newly appointed chief appraisers participate in training programs that would exceed current training requirements on appraisal issues in order to encourage professionalism and

good relations with the public. Too often, chief appraisers are unfamiliar with financial management of an appraisal district, the importance of good public relations, and general laws relating to the office.

Chief appraisers now can serve without any specific training. Although current law requires certain appraisal-related training, and voluntary training is available to chief appraisers, the training required by this bill would give newly appointed chief appraisers better background for the public and legal demands of their position. The bill would assure fair and equal treatment for taxpayers and would represent a good government approach to preparing newly appointed chief appraisers.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

Although this bill would mandate training for newly appointed chief appraisers, it would provide no enforcement provisions beyond stating that a chief appraiser who served in a temporary, provisional, or interim capacity would have up to one year to complete the training.

The training specified in HB 2382 could duplicate courses or programs already offered through two professional associations of appraisers. It is unnecessary to make training a statutory requirement because it already is adequately addressed through these professional associations.

NOTES:

The fiscal note states that the board anticipates that 25 new chief appraisers would attend this training annually at a cost of about \$600 per affected appraisal district.

HB 824 by Talton, which would require appraisal review board members to complete a training and education course annually, passed the House on April 12.