

- SUBJECT:** Filing equal employment opportunity reports with TWC
- COMMITTEE:** Economic Development —favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 5 ayes — Ritter, B. Cook, Deshotel, McCall, Seaman
0 nays
2 absent — Anchia, Kolkhorst
- WITNESSES:** For — Hannah Riddering, Texas National Organization for Women
Against — None
- BACKGROUND:** State agencies must compile annual reports on equal employment opportunities at the agency. Statutes vary from one agency to another on where the reports go after compilation. Some agencies direct the report to the Governor's Office, and some agencies must have the Civil Rights Division of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) review the report before it is filed with the Governor's Office. The Civil Rights Division was formerly the Texas Commission on Human Rights.
- The division executes federal civil rights laws and the Americans with Disabilities Act and has statutory responsibilities for developing statistical information on the hiring of minorities and women by state agencies and for developing certain reports to be sent to the governor. These reports include a comprehensive report about equal employment opportunities and other relevant hiring issues and a report on the workforce composition of state agencies. Government Code, sec. 2052.003 also describes the required contents of the equal employment opportunities report that a state agency sends to the governor.
- DIGEST:** HB 2716 would amend Government Code, sec. 2052.003, to state that an agency's annual report on equal employment opportunities and personnel policy statements would be sent to TWC's Civil Rights Division instead of to the Governor's Office. The division would then compile the data from those statements and issue a report based on that information to the governor and the Legislature. This report could be made separately or as part of any other biennial report to the legislature.

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:**

The agency reports sent to the Governor's Office duplicate reports compiled by TWC's Civil Rights Division, which also are sent to the governor. Such duplication is unnecessary. HB 2716 simply would bring the statute in line with current practice, since TWC already reviews most, if not all, agency reports and must file its own report regarding state agencies. Under this bill, the Governor's Office simply would receive a copy of the report directly from TWC.

One problem in learning about potential discrimination in the workplace is that the public records usually are spread out in different offices. A central place for access, such as at TWC, would make public access more efficient, and this bill would enable that.

The EEO reporting requirement currently is in rules and statutes for about 70 agencies. One way to change the recipient of the official reports (generally from the Governor's Office to TWC) for all these agencies would be to change the statute in one place instead of in 70 places, as this bill would do.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.