

- SUBJECT:** Establishing confidentiality of information given to appraisal offices
- COMMITTEE:** Government Transparency and Operation — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 6 ayes — Elkins, Galindo, Gonzales, Gutierrez, Leach, Scott Turner
0 nays
1 absent — Walle
- WITNESSES:** For — Brent South, Texas Association of Appraisal Districts; Jim Evans; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Kelley Shannon, Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas; Roland Altinger, Harris County Appraisal District; Ned Munoz, Texas Association of Builders; Alvin Lankford, Williamson Central Appraisal District)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify:* John Brusniak, Ryan Law Firm)
- BACKGROUND:** Tax Code, sec. 22.27(a) stipulates that information about a property submitted to an appraisal office be held confidential and not open to public inspection after a promise it will be held confidential.

Sec. 22.27(b) provides exceptions to property-related information under certain circumstances. Sec. 22.27(c) makes it a class B misdemeanor (up to 180 days in jail and/or a maximum fine of \$2,000) for the unauthorized release of confidential information by an employee of an appraisal office.

Some have reported confusion at appraisal offices about what property tax appraisal information must be held confidential and under what circumstances.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 1169 would amend Tax Code, sec. 22.27(a) to specify that rendition statements and the information contained within them, along with other information related to a property filed with an appraisal office,

were confidential.

Additional information submitted to appraisal offices in connection with a property appraisal would be confidential if it was given with a promise of confidentiality from the appraisal office. The confidential information could be released only to employees of the appraisal office, except under the terms of Tax Code, sec. 22.27(b).

This 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, 2015, and would apply only to an offense committed on or after that date.