

- SUBJECT:** Requiring disclosure of certain information about government contracts
- COMMITTEE:** General Investigating and Ethics — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 5 ayes — Kuempel, Collier, S. Davis, Larson, C. Turner
- 0 nays
- 2 absent — Hunter, Moody
- WITNESSES:** For — Tom “Smitty” Smith, Public Citizen, Inc.; (*Registered, but did not testify*: A. Panju, Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas; Dustin Matocha, Texans for Fiscal Responsibility; Michael Schneider, Texas Association of Broadcasters; Donnis Baggett and Alicia Calzada, Texas Press Association; Mark Terry)
- Against — None
- BACKGROUND:** Under Government Code, sec. 572.021, state officers, candidates for office, and state party chairs are required to file verified financial statements with Texas Ethics Commission. The financial statement must include certain information, such as all sources of occupational income.
- Personal financial statements are designed to provide transparency to constituents regarding the financial relationships of governmental officials and candidates. Questions have been raised recently as to whether these personal financial statements require the disclosure of sufficient information.
- DIGEST:** HB 1294 would add a category of information required to be disclosed in a financial statement filed by candidates and certain state officials with the Texas Ethics Commission.
- Required information would include the identification of certain contracts with a governmental entity or with a person who contracted with a governmental entity to fulfill one or more of the person’s obligations to

the entity under that contract.

The candidate or official would be required to disclose the name of each party to the contract for the sale of goods or services of \$2,500 or more to which the individual, the individual's spouse or dependent child, or any business entity of which any of those individuals had at least 50 percent ownership interest was a party.

The information would be included if the aggregate cost of goods or services sold under one or more written contracts described above exceeded \$10,000 in the year covered by the report.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2015, and would apply only to a financial statement filed on or after January 1, 2017.