

SUBJECT: Allowing public-private agreements for digital message display systems

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 — None

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jeremiah Kuntz, Texas Department of Motor Vehicles; Ron Coleman, Texas Department of Public Safety)

BACKGROUND: Transportation Code, sec. 521.006 permits the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to sell advertising space in any driver's handbook published or any mailing made in connection to a driver's license by the department. Proceeds from advertising are deposited into the driver's license administration advertising account.

Certain county and state departments, including DPS, operate field offices where individuals may wait in line to receive services, such as to obtain a driver's license or to transfer a vehicle title. Some say digital message display systems could offer a way for these departments to inform customers of procedures, regulations, and initiatives while they wait in line and that the inclusion of appropriate advertisements could provide departments with a way to cover costs associated with the systems.

DIGEST: CSHB 1542 would permit certain state and county departments to enter into agreements with a public or private entity for a digital message display system to promote department information or general interest news items.

DPS could use display systems in publicly accessible areas of driver's license offices. The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles could use display systems in publicly accessible areas of certain facilities. The commissioners court of a county could use display systems in jury assembly rooms, offices of the tax assessor-collector, or certain branch offices for which a deputy assessor-collector had been appointed.

To fund the digital message display system, digital advertisements could make up a portion of the information displayed on the systems. Each state and county department would retain the right to review and reject any proposed advertising.

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.