

**SUBJECT:** Allowing electronic notices by the Texas Ethics Commission

**COMMITTEE:** General Investigating & Ethics — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 7 ayes — S. Davis, Moody, Capriglione, Nevárez, Price, Shine, Turner  
0 nays

**WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Joanne Richards, Common Ground for Texans; Carol Birch, Public Citizen Texas)  
  
Against — None  
  
On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Ian Steusloff, Texas Ethics Commission)

**BACKGROUND:** Government Code, sec. 572.030 (b) requires the Texas Ethics Commission to mail certain notices to individuals who are required to file an annual financial statement.

**DIGEST:** HB 1381 would remove the requirement that the Texas Ethics Commission (TEC) mail certain notices to individuals required to file an annual financial statement. The commission could adopt rules prescribing how it would provide these notices, as well as others related to lobbyist registration and campaign finance reports.  
  
The bill would not authorize TEC to adopt rules prescribing a method other than mail for issuing warnings of liability to late filers or notices involving complaints or enforcement.  
  
HB 1381 would eliminate a requirement for the TEC, at an individual's request, to mail a copy of the financial statement forms, instructions, and information on associated mailing fees.  
  
This bill would take effect September 1, 2017.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

HB 1381 would authorize the Texas Ethics Commission to adopt rules prescribing how it would notify officials of due dates and instructions on filing their personal financial statements. This would help the agency streamline its administrative functions by allowing it to send notices regarding financial statements by e-mail or other electronic means. Late filers who might face fines would continue to be notified by mail.

The bill also would specify that electronic notification applied to campaign finance and lobby reports, which would update statute to reflect the commission's current practice.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.