

- SUBJECT:** Prohibiting political contributions and expenditures from public funds
- COMMITTEE:** General Investigating and Ethics — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 6 ayes — S. Davis, Moody, Capriglione, Nevárez, Shine, Turner
0 nays
1 absent — Price
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Joanne Richards, Common Ground for Texans; Carol Birch, Public Citizen Texas; Craig McDonald, Texans for Public Justice; Lon Burnam; Hamilton Richards)
Against — None
On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Ian Steusloff, Texas Ethics Commission)
- BACKGROUND:** Election Code, sec. 255.03 prohibits an officer or employee of a political subdivision from knowingly spending or authorizing the spending of public funds for political advertising.

The Texas Ethics Commission in its 2016 report to the Legislature recommended that the prohibition be extended to prohibit the use of public funds to make political expenditures on a ballot issue.
- DIGEST:** HB 2471 would prohibit an officer or employee of a political subdivision from spending or authorizing spending of public funds to make a political contribution or a political expenditure. An officer or employee of a political subdivision also could not directly or indirectly employ a person to use public funds to make an unlawful political contribution or political expenditure.

A violation of this prohibition would be a class A misdemeanor (up to one year in jail and/or a maximum fine of \$4,000).

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017, and would apply only to a political contribution or political expenditure made on or after that date.