

SUBJECT: Keeping temporary data entered in local campaign reports confidential

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 — Danielle Folsom, City of Houston Mayor's Office; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Joanne Richards, Common Ground for Texans; Carol Birch, Public Citizen Texas; Lon Burnam; Hamilton Richards)

Against — None

BACKGROUND: Election Code, sec. 254.0401 requires clerks in counties with a population of 800,000 or more and cities with a population of 500,000 or more to make campaign finance reports filed by candidates and officeholders available to the public on the internet.

Some cities are implementing electronic systems for filers to use in making the reports, and interested parties have expressed concern for the potential misuse or misinterpretation of electronic data that is entered into the form and temporarily saved before the report is completed and filed.

DIGEST: HB 998 would require filing authorities to keep confidential any electronic report data saved in a temporary storage location of the authority for later retrieval and editing. The information could not be publicly disclosed until the report was filed.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.