

**SUBJECT:** Modifying the Texas Real Estate Research Center and certain license fees

**COMMITTEE:** Licensing and Administrative Procedures — committee substitute recommended

**VOTE:** 8 ayes — S. Thompson, Kuempel, Darby, Ellzey, Fierro, Geren, Guillen, Hernandez

0 nays

3 absent — Goldman, Huberty, Pacheco

**WITNESSES:** For — Tray Bates, Texas Realtors (*Registered, but did not testify*: Ned Muñoz, Texas Association of Builders; Daniel Gonzalez and Julia Parenteau, Texas Realtors)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Chelsea Buchholtz, Texas Appraiser Licensing and Certification Board and Texas Real Estate Commission)

**BACKGROUND:** The Texas Real Estate Research Center, housed at Texas A&M University, is governed by an advisory committee consisting of nine members appointed by the governor. Under Education Code sec. 86.53 the center is tasked with conducting and publishing studies relating to real estate and urban or rural economics, developing materials used in certain real estate courses, and assisting the Texas Real Estate Commission with developing accreditation standards for teaching agencies that give courses in real estate, among other responsibilities.

Under Occupations Code sec. 1101.154(b), certain fees are collected and transmitted to Texas A&M University to support the Texas Real Estate Center, including fees collected on the issuance and renewal of broker licenses, sales agent licenses, and certificates of registration.

**DIGEST:** CSHB 2305 would revise provisions governing the Texas Real Estate Research Center's advisory committee, the collection of fees for certain licenses and certificates of registration, and other provisions.

Under the bill, the advisory committee could conduct a meeting by a conference call or virtually through a third-party internet application. Members of the public would have to be able to participate in the meeting unless it was a closed meeting under state law.

The bill would specify that a per diem for a member of the advisory committee or compensation for travel expenses would be provided by the center's budget, rather than set by legislative appropriation. The bill also would specify that the constitutional oath of office taken by appointees to the Texas Real Estate Research Center had to be taken by the 15th calendar day after the individual's appointment.

CSHB 2305 also would specify that fees for a broker license, sales agent license, or certificate of registration would be collected for each year of the term for which the license was issued or renewed. This provision would apply only to the issuance or renewal of a license or certificate of registration on or after the bill's effective date.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021.

**SUPPORTERS SAY:** CSHB 2305 would modernize the Texas Real Estate Research Center by updating its language and practices. The bill also would allow the center to maintain its funding level by clarifying the collection of certain license fees in statute.

The bill would not create additional fees but merely update the statute to reflect how licenses and certificates of registration are issued and renewed today. Revising provisions to specify that the collection of these fees applied to each year of the license term would reflect the original intent behind the center's funding.

**CRITICS** CSHB 2305 would inappropriately increase fees for individuals seeking to

SAY: obtain or renew a broker license, sales agent license, or certificate of registration.