

- SUBJECT:** Authorizing TEC to provide seminars and charge attendance fees
- COMMITTEE:** State Affairs — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 13 ayes — Paddie, Hernandez, Deshotel, Harless, Howard, Hunter, P. King, Lucio, Metcalf, Raymond, Shaheen, Slawson, Smithee
- 0 nays
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, April 23 — 30-1 (Hughes), on Local and Uncontested Calendar
- WITNESSES:** For — Tom Forbes, Professional Advocacy Association of Texas; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Kirk Broaddus; Susana Carranza; Dorothy Ann Compton; Robert Norris)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: J.R. Johnson, Texas Ethics Commission)
- BACKGROUND:** Government Code sec. 571.071(c) authorizes the Texas Ethics Commission (TEC) to offer seminars and charge fees to lobbyists that address issues such as political contributions and expenditures.
- Concerned parties note that while TEC provides educational seminars to registered lobbyists, it is not authorized to offer seminars to elected officials or candidates for public office. It has been suggested that TEC be authorized to offer seminars that address any law it administers and enforces.
- DIGEST:** SB 62 would authorize the Texas Ethics Commission to provide a seminar that addressed the laws it administered and enforced and any other laws it determined were relevant. The commission could charge a fee for attending the seminar in an amount necessary to cover the associated costs, including food or nonalcoholic beverages provided to attendees

The bill also would specify that the cost of providing food or nonalcoholic beverages to attendees of a seminar provided by TEC for lobbyists under applicable law would be included among the costs that TEC could cover by charging a seminar attendance fee.

The 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, 2021.