

SUBJECT: Evaluating the feasibility of leasing state property to certain organizations

COMMITTEE: State Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 7 ayes — Hunter, Hernandez, Geren, Guillen, Metcalf, Smithee, Spiller

2 nays — Dean, Slawson

4 absent — Anchía, Raymond, S. Thompson, Turner

WITNESSES: For — None

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Shawn Hall Lecuona, Kri'ah b'shalom)

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested evaluating the feasibility of leasing available spaces from state agencies and public institutions of higher education to prevent civic organizations and performing artists from losing their meeting and practice spaces due to high costs.

DIGEST: HB 1495 would direct the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (board) and the Texas Facilities Commission (commission) each to conduct a study in collaboration with the Texas Commission on the Arts on the feasibility of leasing to artists available spaces, respectively, in state agency buildings or in buildings or property of public institutions of higher education for the purpose of practicing and performing their arts. The studies would consider factors related to types and availability of spaces, security measures, and financial matters among others. The studies would identify:

- the criteria used to determine the feasibility of leasing each space identified as available for lease;
- the measures instituted to avoid viewpoint bias or other possible biases in the selection of a lease holder;

- the authorized uses of lease income by state agencies or public institutions to benefit each agency or institution offering a space for lease; and
- the reasons a state agency or public institution of higher education would be authorized to decline to lease space at the agency.

By December 2, 2024, the commission and board would be required to submit a report to each member of the Legislature that included results and recommendations of the commission and board related to the studies and statutory changes necessary to authorize leasing space to artists at state agencies and public institutions of higher education.

The provisions of the bill would expire September 1, 2025.

This 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, 2023.