

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 916
By: Wentworth
State Affairs
3/24/1999
As Filed

DIGEST

Currently, the secretary of state must post a notice of all open meetings on bulletin boards accessible to the public 24 hours a day. Bulletin boards with notices are available outside the secretary of state's office in the Capitol. However, at night, because the Capitol is locked, the official bulletin board is in the lobby of the Rudder State Office Building where the Department of Public Safety posts a guard. Additionally, although the secretary of state posts the official notices on bulletin boards, state agencies file their open meeting notices with the secretary of state on-line.

Making the Internet the official posting site for notices would provide quicker and wider access to open meetings notices. A notice will be available to anyone with Internet access within minutes of the agency's submission. The secretary of state would also provide a computer terminal in the secretary of state's office for the public and could provide copies of notices to members of the public without Internet access. S.B. 916 would make the Internet the official site for open meetings notices.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 916 requires the secretary of state to post notices of open meetings on the Internet.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 551.044(a), Government Code, by requiring the secretary of state to post certain meetings on the Internet. Requires the secretary of state to provide a computer terminal for the public to view the notices of meetings.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 551.0148(b), Government Code, by requiring the secretary of state to post the notice on the Internet, rather than on a bulletin board, and to provide a computer terminal for the public to view the notice. Makes a nonsubstantive change.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 551.053(b), Government Code, to make conforming changes.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 1999.
Makes application of this Act prospective.