

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 346
By: Seliger
State Affairs
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

This bill seeks to expand the definition of a political committee under Section 251.001(12) (defining "political committee"), Election Code, to ensure that it captures all entities that make political expenditures and receive political donations in Texas, and that have a principal interest in influencing elections. By changing this definition, this bill will help make certain that all organizations that engage in political campaign activities are subject to disclosure laws, as currently required by political committees.

There are organizations that operate in Texas that collect donations and make political expenditures with the primary intention of determining election outcomes. Many of these organizations have interpreted the current definition of political committee differently, arguing that they are not political committees, and therefore do not need to comply with the Texas Ethics Commission on campaign disclosure rules. The Texas Ethics Commission believes that these organizations are political committees as that term is defined in Section 251.001(12), Election Code. By clarifying this definition to include all entities this bill will enable the Texas Ethics Commission to ensure a more transparent window into campaign expenditures in Texas.

As proposed, S.B. 346 amends current law relating to the classification of certain entities as political committees.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 251.001(12), Election Code, to redefine "political committee" to mean an entity or group of persons that has as a principle purpose accepting political contributions or making political expenditures.

SECTION 2. Provides that the amendment to Section 251.001, Election Code, by this Act is intended to clarify rather than change existing law.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2013.