

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
85R2413 JRR-D

S.B. 840  
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3/2/2017  
As Filed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Current law prohibits the use of an unmanned aircraft to capture an image of an individual or privately owned real property in this state “with the intent to conduct surveillance on the individual or property captured in the image.” The introduced version of the bill that created this provision—H.B. 912, 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013—included an exception which provided that it would be a “defense to prosecution” that an image was captured within 25 miles of the border “for the sole purpose of enforcing border laws.” Oddly, however, the version of the bill that ultimately passed, and the current law today, break this exception in two: current law contains a law-enforcement exception and a blanket exception for images captured within 25 miles of the border, regardless of purpose. Under current law, then, it would appear to be entirely lawful for any person for any reason to “use an unmanned aircraft to capture an image of an individual or privately owned real property in this state with the intent to conduct surveillance on the individual or property captured in the image,” provided the person or property is within 25 miles of the border.

It is difficult to conceive of any legitimate policy goal that would justify subjecting the more-than one million Texans living near the border to arbitrary drone surveillance of themselves or their properties, especially because any legitimate border security operation would be covered by the current law enforcement exception. Accordingly, S.B. 840 would strike this needless and discriminatory exception from the current law.

As proposed, S.B. 840 amends current law relating to certain images captured by an unmanned aircraft.

### **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 423.002(a), Government Code, to delete existing Subdivision (14) providing that it is lawful to capture an image using an unmanned aircraft in this state of real property or a person on real property that is within 25 miles of the United States border, and redesignates the following existing subdivisions accordingly.

SECTION 2. Makes application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2017.