

SUBJECT: Financial disclosure by district and criminal district attorneys

COMMITTEE: State Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 11 ayes — Wolens, Carter, Counts, Craddick, Danburg, Hilbert, Hunter, D. Jones, Longoria, McCall, Ramsay

0 nays

4 absent — S. Turner, Alvarado, Brimer, Stiles

WITNESSES: None

BACKGROUND : Under the Government Code, certain elected officers are required to file verified financial statements with the State Ethics Commission. These include members of the Legislature, statewide elected executive officials or judges, district or appeals court judges, and members of the State Board of Education.

Under the Local Government Code, county and district officers, including district attorneys and criminal district attorneys, in counties with populations of 500,000 or more (Harris, Dallas, El Paso, Bexar, Travis and Tarrant counties) are required to file personal financial disclosure statements with the county auditor.

DIGEST: HB 1659 would include district attorneys and criminal district attorneys in the definition of elected officers required to submit financial statements under the Government Code and delete reference to them under financial reporting provisions of the Local Government Code .

The bill would take effect September 1, 1997.

SUPPORTERS SAY: HB 1659 would promote good government by requiring all district attorneys to comply with financial disclosure requirements of the Texas Ethics Commission. Districts often encompass more than one county, and the broader responsibilities of these elected prosecutors require that they comply with state, rather than county, financial reporting provisions. District

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judges already file with the state rather than the county, reflecting the broader nature of district jurisdiction.

OPPONENTS
SAY: No apparent opposition.