

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 514
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State Affairs
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Texas Supreme Court has recognized and reiterated that the purpose of the Public Information Act (PIA) is to give the public complete information about the affairs of the government and the official acts of public officials and employees. The PIA specifically excludes the judiciary from its provisions, which includes the State Bar of Texas (State Bar), an administrative agency of the judicial branch in Texas. The State Bar Act requires that certain information be easily accessible to the public. The State Bar holds both personal and public information of individual, licensed attorneys for the judiciary and regularly receives requests for the entirety of such information. The release of personal information could subject attorneys and their families to harm relating to their personal safety or identity.

As proposed, S.B. 514 clarifies current law to provide that a licensed attorney may choose to restrict public access to the attorney's personal information, including home address, home telephone number, e-mail address, Social Security number, and date of birth.

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 Subchapter C, Chapter 552, Government Code, by adding Section 552.1176, as follows:

Sec. 552.1176. CONFIDENTIALITY OF CERTAIN INFORMATION OF PERSON LICENSED TO PRACTICE LAW. (a) Provides that information that relates to the home address, home telephone number, electronic mail address, social security number, or date of birth of a person licensed to practice law in this state is confidential and is prohibited from being disclosed to the public under this chapter if the person to whom the information relates chooses to restrict public access to the information, and notifies the governmental body of the person's choice, in writing or electronically, on a form provided by the governmental body.

(b) Provides that a choice made under Subsection (a) remains valid until rescinded in writing or electronically by the person.

(c) Provides that all documents filed with a county clerk and all documents filed with a district clerk are exempt from this section.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2007.