

SUBJECT: Prohibiting state appropriations to pay certain sexual harassment claims

COMMITTEE: State Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 8 ayes — Phelan, Hernandez, Holland, Hunter, P. King, Parker, E. Rodriguez, Springer

0 nays

5 absent — Deshotel, Guerra, Harless, Raymond, Smithee

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 17 — 31-0, on Local and Uncontested Calendar

WITNESSES: None

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised that without an explicit prohibition, taxpayer funds could be used in the future to pay or settle sexual harassment claims against certain elected or appointed state officials.

DIGEST: SB 1577 would prohibit the Legislature from appropriating money and state agencies from using appropriations to settle or pay a sexual harassment claim made against an elected member of the executive, legislative, or judicial branch of state government or a person appointed by the governor to serve as a member of a department, commission, board, or other public office within state government.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.