

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
85R6710 ATP-F

S.B. 1812
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State Affairs
4/18/2017
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Interested parties observe that appraisal districts use taxpayer dollars to lobby members of the legislature. These parties note that district personnel may advocate for or against legislative measures or, in the alternative, districts may employ registered lobbyists to interact with legislators. Given that appraisal district operations are funded by taxpayers' dollars, interested parties argue that these political subdivisions should not be allowed to spend funds for lobbying purposes. These parties observe that such expenditures are an inappropriate use of public funds. Moreover, districts may spend their funds on lobbying efforts that may contradict the interests of classes of taxpayers within their jurisdiction. While appraisal districts should be permitted to serve as a resource for the drafting of appraisal-related legislation, they should not be allowed to advocate for or against legislation.

S.B. 1812 prohibits appraisal districts from using public funds to lobby the legislature. The bill bars districts from spending funds to influence the passage or defeat of legislation. S.B. 1812 does allow appraisal district employees to provide information to members of the legislature or appear before a legislative committee upon request. This allows district personnel to inform members of how proposed legislation would work, or to provide suggestions regarding legislative clarity. Broadly, S.B. 1812 ends the practice of using appraisal district funds to encourage members of the legislature to vote for or against specific pieces of legislation.

As proposed, S.B. 1812 amends current law relating to the authority of an appraisal district to use public money for lobbying activity.

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 305.026, Government Code, by adding Subsection (c-1), as follows:

(c-1) Prohibits an appraisal district, notwithstanding any other provision of this section (Prohibition on Use of Certain Public Funds), from using public money to directly or indirectly influence, or attempt to influence, the passage or defeat of any legislation pending before the legislature. Provides that this subsection does not prevent an appraisal district employee from providing information for a member of the legislature or appearing before a legislative committee at the request of the committee or the member of the legislature.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2017.