

1-1 By: Canales, et al. (Senate Sponsor - Hughes) H.B. No. 2840
1-2 (In the Senate - Received from the House May 6, 2019;
1-3 May 10, 2019, read first time and referred to Committee on Business
1-4 & Commerce; May 20, 2019, reported favorably by the following vote:
1-5 Yeas 8, Nays 0; May 20, 2019, sent to printer.)

1-6 COMMITTEE VOTE

	Yea	Nay	Absent	PNV
1-7				
1-8	Hancock	X		
1-9	Nichols	X		
1-10	Campbell	X		
1-11	Creighton		X	
1-12	Menéndez	X		
1-13	Paxton	X		
1-14	Schwertner	X		
1-15	Whitmire	X		
1-16	Zaffirini	X		

1-17 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
1-18 AN ACT

1-19 relating to the right of a member of the public to address the
1-20 governing body of a political subdivision at an open meeting of the
1-21 body.

1-22 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:
1-23 SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 551, Government Code, is
1-24 amended by adding Section 551.007 to read as follows:

1-25 Sec. 551.007. PUBLIC TESTIMONY. (a) This section applies
1-26 only to a governmental body described by Sections
1-27 551.001(3)(B)-(L).

1-28 (b) A governmental body shall allow each member of the
1-29 public who desires to address the body regarding an item on an
1-30 agenda for an open meeting of the body to address the body regarding
1-31 the item at the meeting before or during the body's consideration of
1-32 the item.

1-33 (c) A governmental body may adopt reasonable rules
1-34 regarding the public's right to address the body under this
1-35 section, including rules that limit the total amount of time that a
1-36 member of the public may address the body on a given item.

1-37 (d) This subsection applies only if a governmental body does
1-38 not use simultaneous translation equipment in a manner that allows
1-39 the body to hear the translated public testimony simultaneously. A
1-40 rule adopted under Subsection (c) that limits the amount of time
1-41 that a member of the public may address the governmental body must
1-42 provide that a member of the public who addresses the body through a
1-43 translator must be given at least twice the amount of time as a
1-44 member of the public who does not require the assistance of a
1-45 translator in order to ensure that non-English speakers receive the
1-46 same opportunity to address the body.

1-47 (e) A governmental body may not prohibit public criticism of
1-48 the governmental body, including criticism of any act, omission,
1-49 policy, procedure, program, or service. This subsection does not
1-50 apply to public criticism that is otherwise prohibited by law.

1-51 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.

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