

Committee on Ethics and Elections

CS/HB 199 — Ethics Requirements for Officers and Employees of Special Tax Districts

by Ethics, Elections and Open Government Subcommittee and Reps. Hunschofsky and Daley (CS/CS/SB 620 by Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee; Ethics and Elections Committee; and Senators DiCeglie and Yarborough)

The bill clarifies the limited exception for public officers and employees of qualifying special districts from the general prohibition that bars public officials from holding any employment or contract with any business entity or agency regulated by or doing business with his or her public agency.

Specifically, the bill clarifies the exception for public officers or employees of a water control district or a special tax district created by general or special law that is limited specifically to constructing, maintaining, managing, and financing improvements in the land area over which the agency has jurisdiction, by specifying that conduct that constitutes a misuse of public position or violates the prohibition on disclosing information that is not otherwise available to the public for their own personal benefit would be considered an impermissible conflict of interest.

In addition, the bill:

- Requires that beginning January 1, 2024, local elected officers of independent special districts and each person who is appointed to fill a vacancy for an unexpired term of such office must complete 4 hours of ethics training covering specified materials.
- Provides that an elected local officer of an independent special district assuming a new office or term of office after March 31 is not required to complete the ethics training for the calendar year in which his or her term of office began.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2023.

Vote: Senate 40-0; House 116-0