

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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H.B. 892
By: Kuempel et al. (Nichols)
Intergovernmental Relations
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Law enforcement and counties have been regularly frustrated in their attempts to effectively enforce gambling statues against game rooms. Last session, H.B. 1127, "the Harris County Game Room Bill," was passed by the Texas Legislature. H.B. 1127, which was requested by Harris County law enforcement, granted regulatory authority to Harris County to combat illegal gambling, which was taking place in game rooms. In particular, though amusement redemption machines ("8-liners") are legal under Chapter 47.01(4)(B) of the Penal Code, businesses and patrons are in violation of the law if winnings are distributed in cash. Illegal cash payouts occurred frequently and were difficult to investigate, as game room operators regularly denied law enforcement access to their premises. H.B. 1127 provided Harris County additional tools to bring game rooms into compliance via registration and permitting requirements, fees, disclosure of ownership, inspection schemes, and civil and criminal penalties.

H.B. 892 simply broadens the Harris County Game Room Bill, making the statute effective statewide, and grants counties further authority to implement their own regulatory structure to confront illegal gambling activity. The bill also provides for criminal penalties in the event a game room is operated in violation of county game room regulations.

H.B. 892 amends current law relating to county regulation of game rooms.

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. Repealer: Section 234.132 (Applicability), Local Government Code.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2019.