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★ DISTRICT 2 ★

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TWO KEY BILLS BOOST AGENCY TRANSPARENCY

AUSTIN – State Rep. Dan Flynn (R-Van) this year authored two major transparency bills that will make state agencies more accountable and give taxpayers more information about how their money is spent.

The transparency measures -- House Bill 12 and House Bill 16 -- passed the Legislature and now await Gov. Rick Perry's signature.

"Taxpayers need and deserve to know how their money is being spent," said Flynn, the Co-Chairman of the Select Committee on Transparency in State Agency Operations. "This legislation will ensure that state agencies are more open and forthcoming about their financial practices, which will empower taxpayers with important and useful information."

House Bill 12 requires that an agency post on its website the value of any gift used to supplement an employee's salary. The agency must also disclose the methodology used to determine the compensation for executive staff members.

"This legislation will help ensure that taxpayer-funded salaries are reasonable and appropriate," Flynn said.

House Bill 16 requires agencies to post agency audits, including internal audits, on their websites. Providing this information online is not expected to create an additional cost for the agency.

"Agencies should allow the public to have as much information as possible about their operations and expenses," Flynn said.

House Speaker Joe Straus created the Select Committee on Transparency in State Agency Operations in order to give taxpayers a clearer picture of agencies' expenses and financial practices. He appointed Flynn and Rep. Carol Alvarado (D-Houston) to chair the committee.

"I want to thank Representatives Flynn and Alvarado, along with their entire committee, for their excellent work this session," Speaker Straus said. "Thanks to the efforts of this committee, state government will be more accountable to taxpayers in the future."

The Texas House took a number of steps to improve transparency this session. The House approved legislation making the state budget simpler and more straightforward. In addition, legislation passed this session will strengthen oversight of the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas.

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