

Wesley Lewis, Laura Prather in Law360: 5 Big Updates to Texas Government Transparency Laws

June 7, 2019 Laura Prather

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The 86th session of the Texas Legislature certainly was a productive one for government transparency advocates across the state. While the Legislature's marquee property tax and education reform measures occupied much of the media spotlight this session, the Legislature also passed several significant pieces of legislation intended to improve government transparency and accountability.

These bills will provide Texans with greater access to information regarding the functioning of their government, including increased transparency regarding how the state spends taxpayer money, and they will result in stronger, more robust open government laws in Texas.

S.B. 943: Contracting Transparency

Sen. Kirk Watson, D-Austin, and Rep. Giovanni Capriglione, R-Southlake, worked with stakeholder groups across the political spectrum to pass legislation aimed at improving transparency regarding government contracting. S.B. 943 principally addressed issues created by the 2015 Texas Supreme Court case, *Boeing Co. v. Paxton*,^[1] which significantly limited public access to information about government contracting under the Texas Public Information Act. S.B. 943 addressed the decision by ensuring greater access to information regarding how government entities spend taxpayer money, while acknowledging private entities' legitimate needs to protect their trade secrets and proprietary information.

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