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## Public notices

Keep broadaccess to keyinformation

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State lawmakers may soon find themselves on a collision course between two good causes: concerns about public budgets and taxpayers' right to notice.

We believe this potential conflict is entirely avoidable. Providing maximum information to taxpayers about the actions of public entities should be accomplished with minimum expense to public entities.

The current focus of this debate is HB 3646 by state Rep. [Linda Harper-Brown](#), R-Irving, which is being heard today in the [Texas House](#) committee Harper-Brown chairs. With all due respect to the chairwoman, this bill is perhaps well-intended; but it is not well thought out.

HB 3646 would allow governmental entities such as school boards and city councils to satisfy the legal requirement of giving public notice by placing the information on their own Internet web sites. We understand that the motivation for this is to save dollars. But the loss in ready access to notice on matters such as budgets and public-funded contracts is a high price to pay for relatively minor savings. And what about the possibilities such limited access could open to favored parties in the letting of contracts involving public dollars?

Of course notice should be posted on these web sites. But it also should be published in newspapers, as well as on these newspapers' web sites and a statewide Web site maintained for that purpose by the [Texas Press Association](#) ([keeptexasnotified.com](#)).

Website-only postings would deny access to the 40 percent of Texans who have no Internet service. These include many seniors and low-income Texans in minority groups whose children make up the numerical majority in our schools.

This is why respected groups such as AARP, LULAC, the [Texas NAACP](#), the [League of Women Voters](#), the [Texas Association of Contractors](#) and others oppose this change. We proudly join them.

Let's rethink this. Keep public notices as accessible as possible.

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