

Richards selects eight for Ethics Commission

By R.G. RATCLIFFE

Houston Chronicle Austin Bureau

AUSTIN — Former Gov. Bill Clements' secretary of state was among eight people Democratic Gov. Ann Richards named to serve on the new, bipartisan Texas Ethics Commission.

Republican George Bayoud, 36, of Dallas was probably the best known of Richards' selections to the commission, which becomes effective in January under a new government ethics law. Bayoud was nominated to Richards by Senate Republicans.

The commission will regulate lobbying and campaign disclosure laws involving state and county officials in Texas.

State voters in November will be asked to make the commission a part of the state Constitution. But even if the proposed amendment fails, the commission still will be activated under an ethics law passed in May.

Some public advocacy groups have complained that the commission is structured in such a way that it will

Clements' official among appointees

rarely take action against errant politicians. A two-thirds vote of the bipartisan commission is needed before it can initiate an investigation.

Other of Richards' appointees to the commission include Democratic environmentalist and consumer advocate James Marston, 38, of Austin. He was nominated by Senate Democrats.

Norman Lyons, 46, of Fort Worth, an underwriter with New York Life Insurance Co., and Louis Muldrow, 60, a Baylor Law School professor, were nominated by Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock.

Appointees for the House include **Isaias D. Torres, 39, a Houston lawyer**, nominated by House Democrats; Fran Coppinger, 53, of Pearland, nominated by Republicans; and Arlington lawyer James Cribbs and former state Rep. Richard Slack of Pecos, both nominated by Speaker Gib Lewis.

Richards also named a transition

committee that will be headed by St. Edwards University President Patricia Hayes to set up the commission operations.

"I want the ethics commission to hit the ground running," Richards said. "This transition task force is charged with making the ethics commission a reality."

Others on the transition team will include Comptroller John Sharp, state purchasing director Lias "Bubba" Steen, John Tunnell with the secretary of state and Ann Fuelberg of the Department of Information Resources.

Richards' ethics adviser, former U.S. Rep. Barbara Jordan, said she will vote for the proposed constitutional amendment despite its shortcomings.

"I am very aware of the weaknesses and the limitations of the commission, but I also know those are structural corrections that can be made by subsequent legislative bodies," Jordan said. "It bothers me, but it is what we have viable and ready for action right now."

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Richards nominates 8 for ethics panel

ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN — Gov. Ann Richards on Friday announced nominees for the state's new Ethics Commission and also appointed a transition team to help the panel "hit the ground running" when it starts operation Jan. 1.

On Nov. 5, voters will decide whether to amend the state constitution to create the Ethics Commission. If voters reject the constitutional provision, however, the committee will be formed through a bill passed by lawmakers in the closing minutes of the regular legislative session that ended in May.

A constitutionally designated committee would be able to set the per diem allowance for lawmakers, and recommend, for voter consideration, salaries of legislators.

Nominees to the Ethics Commission include former

Secretary of State George Bayoud of Dallas, environmental attorney James Marston of Austin, **attorney Isaias Torres of Houston** and civic activist Fran Coppinger of Pearland.

The other nominees are Baylor Law School professor Louis Muldrow of Waco, insurance underwriter Norman Lyons of Fort Worth, attorney James Cribbs of Arlington and former state representative Richard Slack of Pecos.

Those nominees also will be part of the transition task force that will be led by Patricia Hayes, president of St. Edward's University in Austin.

Richards and lawmakers were criticized by several citizen and public watchdog groups who say the commission will be weakened in efforts to stop ethics abuses, because the commission members are political appointees.