

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1977
By: Gallego
Transportation
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Following the attacks of 9-11, the Texas Legislature established the Star of Texas award to honor the sacrifice made by peace officers, firefighters, and emergency first responders who were seriously injured or killed in the line of duty. CSHB 1977 is a natural continuation of this important recognition. These public servants make sacrifices on a daily basis to keep our communities safe. They routinely put themselves in harms way. It is important for the Legislature to recognize and honor their selfless service.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

CSHB 1977 provides that the Star of Texas Award shall be given to a peace officer, a firefighter, and an emergency first responder who is severely injured in the line of duty. In addition, the surviving next of kin shall be awarded the Star of Texas Award if a peace officer, firefighter, or an emergency first responder sustains a fatal injury in the line of duty.

SECTION 1 - Amends Section 3105.002(a) of the Government Code by striking “may” and replacing it with “shall,” clarifying that each peace officer who is injured in the line of duty and the surviving kin of any peace officer who sustains a fatal injury in the line of duty shall receive the Peace Officer’s Star of Texas Award.

SECTION 2 - Amends Section 3105.003(a) of the Government Code by striking “may” and replacing it with “shall,” clarifying that each firefighter who is injured in the line of duty and the surviving kin of any firefighter who sustains a fatal injury in the line of duty shall receive the Firefighter’s Star of Texas Award.

SECTION 3 - Amends Section 3105.004(a) of the Government Code by striking “may” and replacing it with “shall,” clarifying that each emergency medical first responder who is injured in the line of duty and the surviving kin of any emergency medical first responder who sustains a fatal injury in the line of duty shall receive the Emergency Medical First Responder’s Star of Texas Award.

SECTION 4 - Amends Section 3105.002 (a), of the Government Code to award the Star of Texas Award to peace officers, firefighters, or emergency medical first responders who are seriously injured, or the surviving next of kin of peace officers, firefighters or emergency medical first responders who are killed or sustain a fatal injury on or after September 1, 2003.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, then the Act takes effect September 1, 2005.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

In the introduced version, a specialty license plate would have been issued to each Star of Texas Award Recipient. A fee of \$30 dollars would have been assessed for the license plates and

deposited to the Star of Texas Awards account in the general revenue fund. The committee substitute removes the issuance of license plate language. The committee substitute awards the Star of Texas Award to each peace officer, firefighter or emergency medical first responder who is seriously injured, or the surviving next of kin of each peace officer, firefighter or emergency medical first responder who is killed in the line of duty on or after September 1, 2003.