

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1201
By: Menendez
Urban Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Historically, labor organizations that represent peace officers provide legal representation, handle grievances, and negotiate with public employers for their members. The organizations also participate in the political process by raising money for political action committees and endorsing candidates. Dues paid by members of the organization primarily fund these activities. Peace officers are required to receive training mandated by the Commission on Law Enforcement. Regional police academies, universities, and law enforcement agencies have historically provided this training. Some peace officer organizations have now gone into the training business and have sought funding from grants awarded by State agencies. Questions have been raised about the use of State tax dollars to fund the activities of these peace officer organizations. There is a fine line between providing training to peace officers that are required to attend these classes and, at the same time, using the training programs to promote the organization itself and recruit new members to the organization. There is a question as to whether it is proper for the State to provide funds to organizations that are involved in the political process.

As proposed, House Bill No. 1201, would amend the Election Code to prohibit a labor organization that represents peace officers from operating a political action committee or assisting a political committee or from making political contributions if the organization accepts a grant or appropriated money from a State agency

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Would amend Section 253.094, Election Code, by adding subsection (b-1) to provide that a peace officer organization that represents peace officers and accepts a grant or appropriated money from a State agency may not establish a political committee, assist a political committee in performing political activities, or make a political contribution or political expenditure.

SECTION 2. The Act would take effect September 1, 2007.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This Act would take effect September 1, 2007.