

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2656
By: Parker
State Affairs
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Over the years, Texas has witnessed a number of instances where a registered sex offender has been able to successfully conceal their background and obtain employment in areas that are inappropriate or prohibited given their criminal background. In addition, several municipalities in Texas are enacting their own city ordinances governing where registered sex offenders can and can not live, and can and can not socialize.

Given the importance placed on being able to successfully identify registered sex offenders, C.S.H.B. 2656 requires that registered sex offenders, whose victims were younger than 14 years of age at the time of the offense, carry an identifying emblem on their Texas Department of Public Safety issued form of personal identification. This legislation will give employers, children volunteer groups, real estate agents, apartment managers, and law enforcement officials a tool for quickly identifying the status of certain registered sex offenders.

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

C.S.H.B. 2656 amends the Transportation Code to require that a driver's license, personal identification certificate, commercial driver's license, and commercial driver learner's permit issued by the Department of Public Safety to a registered sex offender, whose victim was younger than 14 years of age at the time of the offense, have the letters "RSO", standing for Registered Sex Offender, printed in black on the face of the form of identification. The requirement of this emblem will expire after the 20th anniversary of the date that the person was first required to register as a sex offender.

C.S.H.B. 2656 allows the Department of Public Safety to collect an additional fee from individuals requiring the emblem to implement this requirement, and directs the department to post information on their website explaining what the "RSO" emblem stands for.

This act applies to a personal identification certificate, driver's license, commercial driver's license, or commercial driver learner's permit issued or renewed on or after the effective date.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2007.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 2656 modifies the original by removing language mandating that the "RSO" emblem be printed in the space of the Texas flag and in a font size no smaller than what the Department of Public Safety uses to print the word "Texas", and instead allows the department to determine the suitable font size and location of the emblem on the face of the form of identification.

C.S.H.B. 2656 also differs from the original by applying only to registered sex offenders whose victims were younger than 14 years of age at the time of the offense, and provides that the emblem requirement will expire after the 20th anniversary of the date that the person was first required to register as a sex offender.

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