

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 3152  
By: Harper-Brown  
Transportation  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Currently, the state of Texas will allow somebody to legally drive an 18-wheeler without actually knowing how to drive an 18-wheeler. According to the Texas Department of Public Safety, state regulations don't require a person to take the state issued road test in an 18-wheeler, only in a vehicle with air brakes and the capacity to carry more than 26,000 pounds. But most fully loaded 18-wheelers weigh around 80,000 pounds. This is only one of the reasons why Texas leads the nation in fatal accidents involving commercial trucks.

Furthermore, state and federal governments rely on the industry to monitor itself by making sure new drivers get advanced training before being allowed on the road. However, this could be deemed ineffective if the state does not require specific training standards. House bill 3152 removes ambiguity within training requirements by establishing a five-week training program for commercial drivers to ensure that Texas puts safe and effective commercial vehicle drivers on our highways.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Education Agency in SECTION 1 of this bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

House bill 3152 establishes a safe drivers training program for persons seeking a commercial driver's license. The Texas Education Agency is required to establish and administer the training program for CDL applicants. The program must: require a student to meet the minimum requirements for a CDL established under Chapter 522, Transportation Code; consist of a five-week training period; include on-the-job and behind-the-wheel training specific to the class of vehicle the student will be licensed under; be accredited by the Professional Truck Driver Institute.

The bill states that in order for a person to participate in the program they must submit a letter from a sponsor from a carrier trucking company stating a commitment to hire the participant following the completion of the program. The bill also provides that the participant submit documentation that they are a military veteran.

The TEA is required to award a grant to each person admitted to the program. If the person is not able to continue participation in the program, they must repay the agency. The agency is required to develop a promissory note agreement.

TEA is authorized to accept grants, gifts, funds and donations to support the establishment and administration of the program. TEA is authorized to adopt rules necessary for the administration of this section. The rules are required to provide for a person to be forgiven of repayment due to hardship.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2007.