

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 120
By: Zaffirini
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Children are especially vulnerable to victimization over the Internet. The Internet is a new, anonymous, effective conduit for predators to seek out children for criminal purposes such as producing and distributing child pornography, contacting and stalking children for the purpose of engaging in sexual acts, and exploiting children for sexual tourism for personal and commercial purposes.

This bill establishes a mechanism for accessing educational resources related to online safety at the Texas School Safety Center, and also directs school districts to update their discipline management programs to provide for prevention of the offense of online solicitation of a minor under Section 33.021, Penal Code, or a substantially similar offense by educating students concerning ways to avoid becoming victims or perpetrators of that offense.

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

Note: Unless otherwise specified, statutory references in this BILL ANALYSIS are to the Education Code.

This bill relates to the prevention of and education concerning the offense of online solicitation of a minor.

The bill amends Subchapter G, Chapter 37, Education Code, by adding Section 37.2095 to provide that the Texas School Safety Center (center), in consultation with the attorney general and the Commissioner of Education (commissioner), shall maintain on the center's Internet website a link that enables an Internet user to access free of charge information and educational materials designed to prevent the commission of the offense of online solicitation of a minor under Section 33.021, Penal Code, or any substantially similar offense. Such information and educational materials must be: appropriate for use in a classroom setting in a public primary or secondary school; and designed to educate minors concerning ways to avoid becoming a victim or perpetrator of the offense of online solicitation of a minor under Section 33.021, Penal Code, or a substantially similar offense. The Internet link may link the Internet user to information and educational materials that are prepared by the center, the attorney general, another state agency, or a private entity that operates in the computer or computing industry, including an Internet service provider or a computer software provider.

The bill amends Subsection (a), Section 37.083, Education Code, to provide, in pertinent part, that each school district shall adopt and implement a discipline management program to be included in the district improvement plan under Section 11.252. The program must provide for prevention of the offense of online solicitation of a minor under Section 33.021, Penal Code, or a substantially similar offense by educating students concerning ways to avoid becoming victims or perpetrators of that offense.

The bill provides that the Texas School Safety Center shall post the Internet link required by Section 37.2095, Education Code, as added by this Act, not later than December 1, 2007. The bill further provides that each school district shall modify its discipline management program to

comply with Section 37.083, Education Code, as amended by this Act, as soon as possible after the Texas School Safety Center posts the Internet link required by Section 37.2095, Education Code, as added by this Act, and not later than the first day of the 2008-2009 school year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2007.