

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1415
By: Hinojosa
Criminal Justice
4/17/2007
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Under current law, the Office of the Attorney General has the authority to commission peace officers for the purposes of prosecution assistance and crime prevention. The focus of the criminal investigations units has traditionally been to fill gaps where no investigative resource previously existed. In 2003, Attorney General Greg Abbott established the Fugitive Unit to locate and arrest Texas parole absconders who had in their criminal history a sex crime involving a child victim.

The Fugitive Unit has arrested more than 400 sex offenders, including over 60 unregistered sex offenders since its inception in 2003. The large number of arrests indicate the demand for a unified law enforcement effort to apprehend sex offenders who either violate their parole or fail to register.

As proposed, S.B. 1415 clarifies the statutory authority of the attorney general to commission peace officers for the specific purpose of fugitive apprehension, in addition to other existing criminal law enforcement duties. This bill enables the Fugitive Unit to continue its efforts to implement a cohesive program to ensure parole absconders and wanted unregistered sex offenders are apprehended and returned to custody.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 402.009, Government Code, to authorize the attorney general to employ and commission peace officers as investigators for the purpose of assisting the attorney general in carrying out the duties of that office relating to criminal law enforcement, including prosecution assistance and crime prevention, and for the purpose of fugitive apprehension efforts and programs, rather than for the limited purpose of carrying out duties relating to prosecution assistance and crime prevention.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2007.