

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 759
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Public Safety
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Nearly half of the driving fatalities in Texas occur in alcohol-related accidents. A recent study suggested that at best only 1 in 88 driving while intoxicated events will lead to an arrest. In a state where 1,292 people died in alcohol-related accidents in 2007 alone, every Texan has an obligation to step up enforcement of one of the most dangerous, common crimes in Texas.

H.B. 759 creates a drunk driving hotline whereby motorists can alert local law enforcement agencies to the threats on and off the road. This hotline is meant as a supplement to 9-1-1 service to provide an alternative for Texans who normally would not call 9-1-1 to report dangerous driving. Also, H.B. 759 adds the tools of digital communications such as text messages or email to be used in reporting suspected impaired driving.

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

H.B. 759 amends the Texas Government code by adding Section 411.053, which mandates that the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) shall develop and operate a 24 hour a day toll free number that one may use to report dangerous, impaired or intoxicated driving. The hotline must also be able to be contacted by text message, email communications, or by utilizing a website. The department will then forward the report to the appropriate local authority.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2009.