

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 858
By: Seliger
Public Safety
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, the Texas Education Agency does not have the statutory authority to approve online courses for commercial driving schools. Only public school driver education courses and parents who teach their children to drive can use online driving courses.

S.B. 858 authorizes a driver education school to teach all or part of the classroom portion of an approved driver education course by an alternative method of instruction that does not require students to be present in a classroom if the commissioner of education approves the alternative method.

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

S.B. 858 amends the Education Code to authorize a driver education school to teach all or part of the classroom portion of an approved driver education course by an alternative method of instruction that does not require students to be present in a classroom if the commissioner of education approves the alternative method. The bill authorizes the commissioner to approve the alternative method only if the alternative method includes testing and security measures that the commissioner determines are at least as secure as the measures available in the usual classroom setting and if the course, with the use of the alternative method, satisfies any other requirement applicable to a course in which the classroom portion is taught to students in the usual classroom setting. The bill authorizes the commissioner to establish a fee for an application for approval to offer a driver education course by an alternative method of instruction in an amount the commissioner considers appropriate, not to exceed the amount sufficient to cover the costs of considering the application.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the act does not receive the necessary vote, the act takes effect September 1, 2009.