

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

S.B. 1783  
By: Carona  
Public Safety  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Driver's licenses are an important means of identification in Texas. Though people primarily obtain driver's licenses as a requirement for driving, the license is relied on in many situations as an identifying document. For example, driver's licenses may be used to board a domestic flight, to apply for financial services, to prove a person's identity for the purchase of a weapon, and for many other purposes. For these reasons, it is important that the process for obtaining a driver's license ensures, as much as possible, that the license reflects the holder's true identity.

Currently, Section 521.142(a), Transportation Code, requires the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to accept Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) identification cards as satisfactory proof of identity for purposes of a driver's license application. DPS's acceptance of identification cards issued by TDCJ as satisfactory proof of identity reduces the accuracy of the driver's license process because TDCJ identification cards have been found to contain inaccurate personal identification information. By no longer requiring DPS to accept TDCJ identification cards, DPS will be able to accept such identification cards if DPS believes that the cards are sufficiently accurate to support a driver's license application.

S.B. 1783 amends current law relating to the use of an offender identification card or similar form of identification as proof of identity for an applicant for a driver's license or commercial driver's license.

### **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. 1783 amends the Transportation Code to add the condition that the applicant for an original driver's license or commercial driver's license also provide supplemental verifiable records or documents that aid in establishing identity to the requirement that the Department of Public Safety (DPS) accept an offender identification card or similar form of identification issued to an inmate by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) as satisfactory proof of identity.

S.B. 1783 requires DPS to participate in an inmate identification verification pilot program for the purpose of issuing driver's licenses and personal identification certificates to inmates of TDCJ. The bill authorizes DPS, under the pilot program, to enter into a contract with TDCJ and the Department of State Health Services to establish an identification verification process for inmates of TDCJ and issue a driver's license or a personal identification certificate to an inmate whose identity has been confirmed through the verification process and who otherwise meets the requirements for the issuance of the driver's license or personal identification certificate. The bill authorizes the governing bodies of the participating agencies to agree to continue the pilot program on a permanent basis at the conclusion of the pilot program. The bill requires DPS and TDCJ, not later than December 1, 2010, to jointly issue a report to the standing committees of

the legislature with jurisdiction over issues related to criminal justice and homeland security addressing the status and effectiveness of the pilot program and an analysis of the feasibility of implementing a statewide program based on the pilot program.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2009.