

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 258
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Ways & Means
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) estimates billions of dollars each biennium in economic loss resulting from car accidents, accounting for the loss of productivity from injuries, wages lost from time off work, property damage, and health care costs associated with treating injuries. Injuries resulting from car accidents also levy a heavy burden on trauma facilities across the state.

Currently, trauma facilities receive a significant amount of financial support from the designated trauma facility and emergency medical services account. Trauma centers report millions of dollars in uncompensated trauma care costs yearly, many of which are incurred through the treatment of patients who sustain injuries on Texas roadways. Increasing the state traffic fine would help trauma centers recoup some of those costs and would generate general revenue for TxDOT to help it provide for increased law enforcement patrol during high-risk periods and for driver safety education programs.

Current law provides for a \$30 fine upon conviction or submission of a nolo contendere or guilty plea for a traffic violation. H.B. 258 increases the state traffic fine to \$45. The increased fine is intended to act as a further disincentive to aggressive or intoxicated drivers and to provide for increased funding to trauma facilities across the state.

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. 258 amends the Transportation Code to increase from \$30 to \$45 the amount of the state traffic fine paid by a person who enters a plea of guilty or nolo contendere or is convicted of an offense under state traffic law.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2011.