

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 593
By: Collier et al. (Whitmire)
Criminal Justice
4/23/2015
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

H.B. 593 amends the Occupations Code to require the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE), not later than January 1, 2016, to establish a statewide comprehensive education and training program on canine encounters and canine behavior that consists of at least four hours of classroom instruction and practical training, developed and approved by TCOLE, that addresses the following: handling canine-related calls, anticipating unplanned encounters with canines, and using humane methods and tools in handling canine encounters; recognizing and understanding canine behavior; state laws related to canines; canine conflict avoidance and de-escalation; use of force continuum principles in relation to canines; using nonlethal methods, tools, and resources to avoid and defend against a canine attack; and a general overview of encounters with other animals. The bill requires TCOLE to review the training program's content at least once every four years and update the program as necessary.

H.B. 593 requires TCOLE to require an officer licensed by TCOLE on or after January 1, 2016, to complete the canine encounter training program as part of the minimum curriculum requirements for law enforcement training programs and schools not later than the second anniversary of the date the officer is licensed unless the officer completes the program as part of the officer's basic training course. The bill adds the completion of the canine encounter training program as a requirement for an intermediate or advanced proficiency certificate issued by TCOLE on or after January 1, 2016. The bill specifies that an officer who has completed at least four hours of a canine encounter training program is not required to complete the program established under the bill's provisions.

H.B. 593 amends current law relating to canine encounter training for peace officers.

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 1701.253, Occupations Code, by adding Subsection (l), as follows:

(l) Requires the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE), as part of the minimum curriculum requirements, to require an officer licensed by TCOLE on or after January 1, 2016, to complete a canine encounter training program established by TCOLE under Section 1701.261. Requires an officer to complete the program not later than the second anniversary of the date the officer is licensed under this chapter unless the officer completes the program as part of the officer's basic training course.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter F, Chapter 1701, Occupations Code, by adding Section 1701.261, as follows:

Sec. 1701.261. CANINE ENCOUNTER TRAINING PROGRAM. (a) Requires TCOLE to establish a statewide comprehensive education and training program on canine encounters and canine behavior. Requires that the training program consist of at least four

hours of classroom instruction and practical training, developed and approved by TCOLE, that addresses:

- (1) handling canine-related calls, anticipating unplanned encounters with canines, and using humane methods and tools in handling canine encounters;
- (2) recognizing and understanding canine behavior;
- (3) state laws related to canines;
- (4) canine conflict avoidance and de-escalation;
- (5) use of force continuum principles in relation to canines;
- (6) using nonlethal methods, tools, and resources to avoid and defend against a canine attack; and
- (7) a general overview of encounters with other animals.

(b) Requires TCOLE, at least once every four years, to review the content of the training program under this section and update the program as necessary.

(c) Provides that, notwithstanding Sections 1701.253(l) and 1701.402(l), an officer who has completed at least four hours of a canine encounter training program is not required to complete the program under this section.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 1701.402, Occupations Code, by adding Subsection (l), to require an officer, as a requirement for an intermediate or advanced proficiency certificate issued by TCOLE on or after January 1, 2016, to complete the canine encounter training program established by TCOLE under Section 1701.261.

SECTION 4. Requires TCOLE, not later than January 1, 2016, to establish the canine encounter training program as required by Section 1701.261, Occupations Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 5. Provides that, notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, an officer employed by a county with a population of less than 125,000 is not required to comply with Sections 1701.253(l) and 1701.402(l), Occupations Code, as added by this Act, before January 1, 2017.

SECTION 6. Effective date: September 1, 2015.