

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 593  
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Homeland Security & Public Safety  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Interested parties note that not all Texas police officers receive adequate training to prepare for a canine encounter even though many officers will likely encounter a canine at some point in the officer's career. C.S.H.B. 593 seeks to equip a police officer with the knowledge and skills necessary to properly handle canine encounters.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **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**

C.S.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.

C.S.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.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2015.

## COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 593 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following comparison is organized and formatted in a manner that indicates the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

### INTRODUCED

SECTION 1. Section 1701.253, Occupations Code, is amended by adding Subsection (l) to read as follows:

(l) As part of the minimum curriculum requirements, the commission shall require an officer to complete an animal encounter training program established by the commission under Section 1701.261. An officer shall complete the program not later than the second anniversary of the date the officer is licensed under this chapter or the date the officer applies for an intermediate proficiency certificate, whichever date is earlier. The training program required under this subsection may not be provided as an online course.

SECTION 2. Subchapter F, Chapter 1701, Occupations Code, is amended by adding Section 1701.261 to read as follows:

Sec. 1701.261. ANIMAL ENCOUNTER TRAINING PROGRAM. (a) The commission shall establish a statewide comprehensive education and training program on animal encounters and animal behavior. The training program must consist of at least eight hours of classroom instruction and practical training and may include the use of live animals in:

- (1) handling animal-related calls or unplanned encounters with animals, with an emphasis on canine-related incidents and the use of nonlethal methods and tools in handling an encounter;
- (2) identifying and understanding animal behavior;
- (3) laws and ordinances related to animals;
- (4) avoiding an animal attack; and

(5) using nonlethal methods to defend against an animal attack.

### HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

SECTION 1. Section 1701.253, Occupations Code, is amended by adding Subsection (l) to read as follows:

(l) As part of the minimum curriculum requirements, the commission shall require an officer licensed by the commission on or after January 1, 2016, to complete a canine encounter training program established by the commission under Section 1701.261. An officer shall 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. Subchapter F, Chapter 1701, Occupations Code, is amended by adding Section 1701.261 to read as follows:

Sec. 1701.261. CANINE ENCOUNTER TRAINING PROGRAM. (a) The commission shall establish a statewide comprehensive education and training program on canine encounters and canine behavior. The training program must consist of at least four hours of classroom instruction and practical training, developed and approved by the commission, 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

(b) At least once every four years, the commission shall review the content of the training program under this section and update the program as necessary.

(c) Except as provided by Section 1701.352(b-1), an officer who completes the training program established under this section is not required to retake the program.

SECTION 3. Section 1701.352, Occupations Code, is amended by adding Subsection (b-1) to read as follows:

(b-1) The commission shall require each officer to complete the animal encounter training program established by the commission under Section 1701.261 at least once every 48 months. The training program required under this subsection may be provided as an online continuing education course.

SECTION 4. Section 1701.402, Occupations Code, is amended by adding Subsection (l) to read as follows:

(l) As a requirement for an intermediate proficiency certificate, an officer must complete the animal encounter training program established by the commission under Section 1701.261. The training program required under this subsection may not be provided as an online course.

SECTION 5. Not later than January 1, 2016, the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement shall establish the animal encounter training program as required by Section 1701.261, Occupations Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 6. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.

(7) a general overview of encounters with other animals.

(b) At least once every four years, the commission shall review the content of the training program under this section and update the program as necessary.

(c) 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.

No equivalent provision.

SECTION 3. Section 1701.402, Occupations Code, is amended by adding Subsection (l) to read as follows:

(l) As a requirement for an intermediate or advanced proficiency certificate issued by the commission on or after January 1, 2016, an officer must complete the canine encounter training program established by the commission under Section 1701.261.

SECTION 4. Not later than January 1, 2016, the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement shall establish the canine encounter training program as required by Section 1701.261, Occupations Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 5. Same as introduced version.