

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1887
By: Muñoz, Jr.
Homeland Security & Public Safety
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

There is reportedly a critical need for expanded law enforcement training opportunities in South Texas. Interested parties assert that, while the Texas Workforce Commission projects an estimated 22 percent increase in certified police officer positions for the South Texas region in the next 10 years, access to training opportunities in the region is limited. In fact, there are only four police academies in Hidalgo and Starr Counties that offer basic peace officer licensing courses and that receive certification from the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE). Moreover, the training provided by these police academies does not result in college credit, which is disappointing to law enforcement professionals who are eager to earn college credit and college degrees in their field. In addition to facing these challenges, there are concerns that TCOLE-certified officers in local police departments are being recruited for positions with state and federal agencies. H.B. 1887 seeks to provide for a well-trained law enforcement community to meet the needs of the South Texas region.

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

H.B. 1887 amends the Education Code to establish the regional center for public safety excellence to develop and provide education and training for law enforcement personnel in the Rio Grande Valley. The bill requires South Texas College to administer the regional center in partnership with political subdivisions and participating school districts in the Rio Grande Valley. The bill establishes that the regional center's headquarters are located at South Texas College in Pharr, Texas, and authorizes the regional center to use property and facilities at other locations in Hidalgo and Starr Counties. The bill requires the regional center, in developing its training programs and courses, to ensure that the program or course curriculum satisfies any requirements imposed by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) for the regional center to operate as a TCOLE-approved training provider. The bill authorizes TCOLE to authorize reimbursement for a political subdivision or state agency for expenses incurred in attendance by personnel of the entity at a training program offered by the regional center. The bill authorizes the regional center to solicit and accept gifts and grants from any public or private source for purposes relating to the regional center and authorizes the legislature to appropriate money for the same purposes.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2015.