

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
84R23147 JRR-D

C.S.S.B. 754
By: Watson
Transportation
4/22/2015
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In keeping with Chapter 662 (Motorcycle Operator Training and Safety) of the Transportation Code, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) currently administers the Motorcycle Operator Training and Safety Program (the "Motorcycle Safety Program"). The purpose of the Motorcycle Safety Program is twofold: "(1) to make available to motorcycle operators . . . information relating to the operation of motorcycles . . . and . . . courses in knowledge, skills, and safety relating to the operation of motorcycles; and (2) to provide information to the public on sharing roadways with motorcycles." As part of this mission, DPS contracts with private individuals to provide motorcycle operator training and safety programs. Under current law, it is a Class B misdemeanor to operate a training program for consideration without DPS approval.

The Transportation Code also requires that \$5 from certain motorcycle license application and renewal fees be deposited in a dedicated general revenue account known as the Motorcycle Safety Account (GR 0501). Although the Transportation Code states that this money "may be used only to defray the cost of administering the motorcycle operator training and safety program," the legislature has not appropriated funds from the account since 2005. As a result, DPS's spending on the Motorcycle Safety Program has decreased by 59 percent since 2004.

This trend is particularly troubling because it corresponds to an increase in Texas motorcycle fatalities. For example, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) reports that 495 motorcycle fatalities occurred in Texas in 2013, which represents a five percent increase from 2012.

The committee substitute deletes SECTIONS 1, 2, and 4 from the bill as introduced. In addition, the committee substitute deletes Subsections (a-1) and (b-1) from SECTION 3 of the bill.

With these changes, C.S.S.B. 754 will only make one change to existing law. Specifically, it will allow the Texas Department of Transportation to use funds from the motorcycle education fund account to conduct its "Share the Road" campaign.

C.S.S.B. 754 amends current law relating to the use of money in the motorcycle education fund account for certain motorcycle safety programs.

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 662.011(b), Transportation Code, as follows:

(b) Requires that money deposited to the credit of the motorcycle education fund account be used only to defray the cost of:

(1) administering the motorcycle operator training and safety program; and

(2) conducting the motorcyclist safety and share the road campaign described by Section 201.621 (Motorcyclist Safety and Share the Road Campaign).

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2015.