

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1214
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Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties report that search and rescue dogs go through different types of training, including training in human remains detection, in preparation for natural disasters or missing persons reports. The parties are concerned that current training for human remains detection does not adequately prepare the dogs for these missions because trainers must resort to using items with a human scent, rather than actual human remains. In addition, the parties contend that there is no specific authorization for human remains to be donated for forensic science education, further hindering training. S.B. 1214 seeks to address these issues.

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

S.B. 1214 amends the Health and Safety Code to add to the authorized uses of a body or anatomical specimen donated to the Anatomical Board of the State of Texas the use to further forensic science. The bill includes among the persons to whom an anatomical gift may be made a search and rescue organization or recovery team that is recognized by the board, that is exempt from federal taxation under the federal Internal Revenue Code of 1986, and that uses human remains detection canines with the authorization of a local or county law enforcement agency. The bill specifies that the term "education," with respect to the purposes authorized by law for making an anatomical gift, includes forensic science education and related training. The bill includes forensic science programs and applicable search and rescue organizations or recovery teams among the authorized recipients to whom the board or the board's representative is required to distribute and authorized to redistribute, as applicable, certain donated bodies.

S.B. 1214 requires the informational document required to be developed and made available online by the board about the risks and benefits associated with anatomical gifts and donation information to include information regarding a gift of a decedent's body or anatomical specimen for purposes of forensic science education. The bill requires the board to adopt the rules necessary to implement the bill's provisions as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2015.