

By: Giddings

H.B. No. 579

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to animal encounter training for peace officers.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

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

(1) 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.

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 provide instruction 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;

1 (4) avoiding an animal attack; and

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

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

7 (c) Each officer who has not completed the training program
8 as required by Section 1701.253(1) shall complete the training
9 program not later than September 1, 2017.

10 (d) Subsection (c) and this subsection expire January 1,
11 2019.

12 SECTION 3. Section 1701.402, Occupations Code, is amended
13 by adding Subsection (1) to read as follows:

14 (1) As a requirement for an intermediate proficiency
15 certificate, an officer must complete the animal encounter training
16 program established by the commission under Section 1701.261.

17 SECTION 4. Not later than January 1, 2016, the Texas
18 Commission on Law Enforcement shall adopt the rules necessary to
19 establish the animal encounter training program as required by
20 Section 1701.261, Occupations Code, as added by this Act.

21 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.