

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2144
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Homeland Security & Public Safety
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been reported that, depending on the conflict for which they have been deployed, it has been estimated that between 11 and 30 percent of veterans will experience some sort of post-traumatic stress during their lifetime. It has been suggested that law enforcement personnel are often the first to respond to a post-traumatic stress-associated crisis involving a veteran, and concerns have been raised relating to the safety of each in these situations. C.S.H.B. 2144 seeks to protect both law enforcement personnel and veterans in Texas by requiring the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement to include a trauma-affected veterans' training program in the minimum curriculum requirements of law enforcement officers.

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 rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement in SECTION 3 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2144 amends the Occupations Code to require the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) to require, as part of the minimum curriculum requirements for a school operated by or for the state or a political subdivision of the state for training officers, a peace officer or reserve law enforcement officer to complete a trauma affected veterans training program on veterans with combat-related trauma, post-traumatic stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, and traumatic brain injuries. The bill authorizes an officer to satisfy the training program by completing the training program for peace officers that provides information on veterans with combat-related trauma, post-traumatic stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, or a traumatic brain injury or an alternative training program developed under the bill's provisions similar to such training program for peace officers. The bill requires the program to be completed 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. These training program requirements apply only to a peace officer who first begins to satisfy those requirements on or after January 1, 2020. The bill requires TCOLE, not later than January 1, 2020, to adopt the rules necessary to implement the training program requirements.

C.S.H.B. 2144 requires TCOLE, in collaboration with the Texas Veterans Commission, to establish and maintain an alternative training program of not more than eight hours that is based on and similar to the training program for peace officers that provides information on veterans with combat-related trauma, post-traumatic stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, or a traumatic brain injury. The bill requires TCOLE to establish the alternative training program not later than January 1, 2020.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2019.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 2144 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute includes an authorization for a peace officer to satisfy the training program requirements with certain alternative training programs.

The substitute changes the date TCOLE is required to adopt the rules necessary to implement the training program from December 1, 2019, to January 1, 2020.

The substitute includes a provision making the training program applicable only to a peace officer who first begins to satisfy those requirements on or after January 1, 2020.

The substitute includes a requirement for TCOLE to establish and maintain an alternative training program that is based on and similar to the training program for peace officers that provides information on veterans with combat-related trauma, post-traumatic stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, or a traumatic brain injury.

The substitute does not include a provision making the bill's provisions applicable only to an application for a license that is submitted on or after the bill's effective date.