

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 971
By: Huffman
Homeland Security & Public Safety
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been noted that, although methods of detecting strangulation have improved in recent years, law enforcement officers are often not as well versed in how best to identify physical and verbal indicators of strangulation. Because many survivors of domestic abuse are subjected to strangulation, there have been calls to ensure that law enforcement officers can identify signs of strangulation. S.B. 971 seeks to answer those calls by requiring that certain law enforcement officers receive training on recognizing and recording circumstances indicating that a victim may have been assaulted in a manner that involved strangulation.

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. 971 amends the Occupations Code to include instruction on recognizing and recording circumstances indicating that a victim may have been assaulted in a manner constituting a third degree felony assault involving strangulation of the victim by an individual in a dating relationship with the victim, a family member of the victim, or an individual in the same household as the victim among the required contents of the training in documentation of certain cases included as part of the minimum curriculum requirements and the continuing education training programs for certain law enforcement officers. The bill requires the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement, not later than January 1, 2020, to establish or modify training programs as necessary to comply with the bill's provisions and makes the revised minimum curriculum requirements applicable only to a peace officer who first begins to satisfy those requirements on or after January 1, 2020.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2019.