

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1262
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Homeland Security & Public Safety
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

While peace officers in many cities and counties in Texas frequently interact with individuals experiencing homelessness who often have unique needs, there are concerns that the officers are not given proper training on how best to interact with these individuals given the trauma the individuals may have experienced. It has been suggested that providing training for these officers on trauma-informed techniques to facilitate interactions with homeless youth and adults and on the resources available to these individuals would provide officers key insight into the different needs of these individuals and help guide them away from involvement in the criminal justice system. C.S.H.B. 1262 seeks to create a bridge of understanding between law enforcement and Texans who are experiencing homelessness by requiring this additional training as part of the continuing education for officers in certain areas with larger homeless populations.

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

C.S.H.B. 1262 amends the Occupations Code to require a peace officer who is employed by the law enforcement agency of a political subdivision with a homeless population of 25 or more, as determined by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE), to complete as part of their continuing education a one-time training program established by TCOLE on trauma-informed techniques to facilitate interactions with homeless youth and adults and on the resources available to those individuals. The training must be completed not later than the second anniversary of the date the officer was hired. The bill requires TCOLE to determine and notify, for each 48-month continuing education training cycle, each law enforcement agency to which this additional training requirement applies.

C.S.H.B. 1262 requires TCOLE to establish the training program and make the determination and notification not later than January 1, 2022. A peace officer who is employed by an applicable law enforcement agency on January 1, 2022, must complete the additional training not later than January 1, 2024.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 1262 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 limits the applicability of the training requirement to peace officers employed by the law enforcement agency of a political subdivision with a homeless population of 25 or more, as determined by TCOLE. The substitute does not include a provision limiting the training requirement to a person who submits an application for a peace officer license on or after January 1, 2022.

The substitute does not require completion of the training as part of the minimum law enforcement training curriculum requirements for officer training schools, but requires completion of the training instead through a one-time training course as part of a peace officer's continuing education. The substitute changes the time frame for completing the training to not later than the second anniversary of the date the officer was hired from not later than the earlier of the following:

- the last day of the first full continuing education training period after the date the officer is licensed; or
- the date the officer applies for an intermediate proficiency certificate.

The substitute includes requirements for TCOLE to determine and notify the law enforcement agencies to which the additional training requirement applies.

The substitute includes a requirement for an officer employed by an applicable agency on January 1, 2022, to complete the training not later than January 1, 2024.