

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 4259
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Homeland Security & Public Safety
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The majority of firearm deaths in the United States are suicides. In 2019 alone, there were more than 2,000 firearm suicide deaths in Texas, including more than 150 children and teenagers. These statistics suggest that awareness of and education on suicide would be beneficial for individuals with access to firearms. C.S.H.B. 4259 seeks to direct the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Health and Human Services Commission to cooperatively develop a suicide prevention informational brochure to be posted on the DPS website and distributed to individuals applying for or renewing a handgun license.

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. 4259 amends the Government Code to require the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to post on its website a printable brochure, developed in cooperation with the Health and Human Services Commission, that includes the following suicide prevention information:

- information regarding suicide prevention, the warning signs that a person is at risk of suicide, and state agencies that provide mental health and suicide prevention services; and
- the phone number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.

The bill requires DPS to update the brochure not later than October 1 of each year and to provide the brochure by mail or email to each new applicant for a handgun license.

C.S.H.B. 4259 gives DPS the option to email to a handgun license holder whose license is nearing expiration the written notice of expiration, a renewal application form, and the informational form that describes state law regarding the use of deadly force and the places where it is unlawful for a license holder to carry a handgun as an alternative to mailing those materials to the person. The bill includes the brochure on suicide prevention among the license renewal materials that must be provided in that manner.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 4259 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.

While the original required DPS to develop and post on its website a brochure regarding firearm violence and suicide prevention, the substitute limits the scope of this requirement to apply only to suicide prevention. Accordingly, the substitute does not include statistics regarding victims of firearm violence in the required contents of the brochure and does not include the following provisions that were in the original:

- the requirement for the classroom instruction portion of a handgun proficiency course to include the information covered in the brochure; and
- provisions prohibiting a licensed firearms dealer from selling or transferring a firearm to certain individuals without providing a copy of the brochure to the person at the time of the sale or transfer and defining "licensed firearms dealer."

The substitute includes a requirement not in the original for DPS to provide the brochure by mail or email to each new applicant for a handgun license.

The substitute provides DPS the option to provide certain handgun license renewal materials to a license holder whose license is nearing expiration by email as an alternative to mailing the materials, whereas the original did not provide this option.