87R7329 EAS-D

By:  Guillen H.B. No. 2675

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a license to carry a handgun for a person who is at increased risk of becoming a victim of violence.

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

SECTION 1.  Section 411.177, Government Code, is amended by amending Subsections (b) and (c) and adding Subsections (b-1), (b-2), and (b-3) to read as follows:

(b)  Except as otherwise provided by Subsection (b-1), the [~~The~~] department shall, not later than the 60th day after the date of the receipt by the director's designee of the completed application materials:

(1)  issue the license;

(2)  notify the applicant in writing that the application was denied:

(A)  on the grounds that the applicant failed to qualify under the criteria listed in Section 411.172;

(B)  based on the affidavit of the director's designee submitted to the department under Section 411.176(c); or

(C)  based on the affidavit of the qualified handgun instructor submitted to the department under Section 411.188(k); or

(3)  notify the applicant in writing that the department is unable to make a determination regarding the issuance or denial of a license to the applicant within the 60-day period prescribed by this subsection and include in that notification an explanation of the reason for the inability and an estimation of the additional period [~~amount of time~~] the department will need to make the determination.

(b-1)  If the applicant submits with the completed application materials an application for a designation under Section 411.184, the department shall, without charging an additional fee, expedite the application. Not later than the 10th day after the receipt of the materials under this subsection, the department shall:

(1)  issue the license with the designation; or

(2)  notify the applicant in writing that the applicant is not eligible for the designation under Section 411.184 and the application for the license will be processed in the regular course of business.

(b-2)  Notwithstanding Subsection (b-1), if the department determines that the applicant is eligible for the designation under Section 411.184 but is unable to quickly make a determination regarding the issuance or denial of a license to the applicant, the department shall provide written notice of that fact to the applicant and shall include in that notice an explanation of the reason for the inability and an estimation of the additional period the department will need to make the determination.

(b-3)  The director shall adopt policies for expedited processing under Subsection (b-1).

(c)  Failure of the department to issue or deny a license for a period of more than 30 days after the department is required to act under Subsection (b) constitutes denial, regardless of whether the applicant was eligible for expedited processing of the application under Subsection (b-1).

SECTION 2.  Section 411.179(a), Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  The department by rule shall adopt the form of the license.  A license must include:

(1)  a number assigned to the license holder by the department;

(2)  a statement of the period for which the license is effective;

(3)  a photograph of the license holder;

(4)  the license holder's full name, date of birth, hair and eye color, height, weight, and signature;

(5)  the license holder's residence address or, as provided by Subsection (d), the street address of the courthouse in which the license holder or license holder's spouse serves as a federal judge or the license holder serves as a state judge;

(6)  the number of a driver's license or an identification certificate issued to the license holder by the department; [~~and~~]

(7)  the designation "VETERAN" if required under Subsection (e); and

(8)  any at-risk designation for which the license holder has established eligibility under Section 411.184.

SECTION 3.  Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 411.184 to read as follows:

Sec. 411.184.  AT-RISK DESIGNATION. (a) The department shall develop a procedure for persons who are at increased risk of becoming a victim of violence to:

(1)  obtain a handgun license on an expedited basis, if the person is not already a license holder; and

(2)  qualify for an at-risk designation on the license.

(b)  A person is eligible for an at-risk designation under this section if:

(1)  the person is protected under, or a member of the person's household or family is protected under:

(A)  a temporary restraining order or temporary injunction issued under Subchapter F, Chapter 6, Family Code;

(B)  a temporary ex parte order issued under Chapter 83, Family Code;

(C)  a protective order issued under Chapter 85, Family Code;

(D)  a protective order issued under Chapter 7B, Code of Criminal Procedure; or

(E)  a magistrate's order for emergency protection issued under Article 17.292, Code of Criminal Procedure; or

(2)  the person participates in the address confidentiality program under Subchapter B, Chapter 58, Code of Criminal Procedure.

(c)  The director may adopt rules to accept alternative documentation not described by Subsection (b) that shows that the person is at increased risk of becoming a victim of violence.

(d)  A person may receive an at-risk designation under this section if the person submits to the department, in the form and manner provided by the department:

(1)  an application for the designation;

(2)  evidence of the increased risk of becoming a victim of violence, as provided by Subsection (b) or rules adopted under Subsection (c); and

(3)  any other information that the department may require.

(e)  A license holder may apply for the designation under this section by making an application for a duplicate license. A person who is not a license holder may apply for the designation with the person's application for an original license to carry a handgun.

(f)  A person with a designation granted under this section shall annually certify that the person continues to qualify for the designation and shall submit to the department any information the department requires to verify the person's continuing eligibility. A person who no longer qualifies for the designation under this section shall immediately notify the department.

(g)  If based on the information received under Subsection (f) the department determines that the person is no longer eligible for a designation under this section, the department shall notify the person and issue to the person a duplicate license without a designation.

(h)  On receipt of a duplicate license without a designation under Subsection (g), the license holder shall return the license with the designation to the department.

(i)  The department may not charge a fee for issuing a duplicate license with a designation under this section or for issuing a duplicate license without a designation if the person no longer qualifies for the designation. If a person applies for a designation at the same time the person applies for an original license under this subchapter, the department may charge only the licensing fee.

SECTION 4.  Section 46.035, Penal Code, is amended by adding Subsection (n) to read as follows:

(n)  It is a defense to prosecution under Subsections (b)(1), (2), (4), and (5) and (c) that at the time of the commission of the offense the actor was carrying a handgun and held a license issued under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code, bearing an at-risk designation under Section 411.184 of that code.

SECTION 5.  Section 46.15(a), Penal Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a)  Sections 46.02 and 46.03 do not apply to:

(1)  peace officers or special investigators under Article 2.122, Code of Criminal Procedure, and neither section prohibits a peace officer or special investigator from carrying a weapon in this state, including in an establishment in this state serving the public, regardless of whether the peace officer or special investigator is engaged in the actual discharge of the officer's or investigator's duties while carrying the weapon;

(2)  parole officers, and neither section prohibits an officer from carrying a weapon in this state if the officer is:

(A)  engaged in the actual discharge of the officer's duties while carrying the weapon; and

(B)  in compliance with policies and procedures adopted by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice regarding the possession of a weapon by an officer while on duty;

(3)  community supervision and corrections department officers appointed or employed under Section 76.004, Government Code, and neither section prohibits an officer from carrying a weapon in this state if the officer is:

(A)  engaged in the actual discharge of the officer's duties while carrying the weapon; and

(B)  authorized to carry a weapon under Section 76.0051, Government Code;

(4)  an active judicial officer as defined by Section 411.201, Government Code, who is licensed to carry a handgun under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code;

(5)  an honorably retired peace officer or other qualified retired law enforcement officer, as defined by 18 U.S.C. Section 926C, who holds a certificate of proficiency issued under Section 1701.357, Occupations Code, and is carrying a photo identification that is issued by a federal, state, or local law enforcement agency, as applicable, and that verifies that the officer is an honorably retired peace officer or other qualified retired law enforcement officer;

(6)  the attorney general or a United States attorney, district attorney, criminal district attorney, county attorney, or municipal attorney who is licensed to carry a handgun under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code;

(7)  an assistant United States attorney, assistant attorney general, assistant district attorney, assistant criminal district attorney, or assistant county attorney who is licensed to carry a handgun under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code;

(8)  a bailiff designated by an active judicial officer as defined by Section 411.201, Government Code, who is:

(A)  licensed to carry a handgun under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code; and

(B)  engaged in escorting the judicial officer;

(9)  a juvenile probation officer who is authorized to carry a firearm under Section 142.006, Human Resources Code; [~~or~~]

(10)  a person who is volunteer emergency services personnel if the person is:

(A)  carrying a handgun under the authority of Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code; and

(B)  engaged in providing emergency services; or

(11)  a person who is carrying a handgun and holds a license to carry a handgun issued under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code, that bears an at-risk designation under Section 411.184 of that code.

SECTION 6.  The public safety director of the Department of Public Safety shall adopt the rules necessary to implement Section 411.184, Government Code, as added by this Act, not later than December 1, 2021.

SECTION 7.  (a) Section 411.177, Government Code, as amended by this Act, applies only to an application for a license to carry a handgun for which the completed application materials are received by the Department of Public Safety on or after January 1, 2022.

(b)  The Department of Public Safety may not accept an application for or grant a designation under Section 411.184, Government Code, as added by this Act, before January 1, 2022.

SECTION 8.  The change in law made by this Act in amending Sections 46.035 and 46.15, Penal Code, applies only to an offense committed on or after January 1, 2022. An offense committed before January 1, 2022, is governed by the law in effect on the date the offense was committed, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose. For purposes of this section, an offense was committed before January 1, 2022, if any element of the offense occurred before that date.

SECTION 9.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.