

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 517  
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Corrections  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Currently, the Board of Pardons and Paroles (BPP) interprets the term "a close relative of a deceased victim" as it appears in state law relating to victim impact statements to apply only to relatives of victims who have died as the result of the offense committed. By taking this interpretation, the BPP may deny close relatives of deceased victims that have passed away for other reasons from being guaranteed the right to speak at a parole hearing. Even with this interpretation, the BPP has granted close relatives of deceased victims who have passed away for other reasons the ability to testify at hearings in certain cases. However, this right remains left to the discretion of the BPP, whose members change over time. H.B. 517 seeks to codify the current practices of granting close relatives of deceased victims the right to testify for victims who can no longer speak for themselves, regardless of how they passed away.

### **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**

H.B. 517 amends the Government Code to clarify that the definition of "close relative of a deceased victim" for purposes of victim impact statements for a parole panel considering the release of an inmate on parole or to mandatory supervision includes a qualified relative of a deceased victim, regardless of whether the victim's death was related to the offense committed.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2023.