

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 1152  
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Homeland Security & Public Safety  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

In recent years, law enforcement agencies and political subdivisions have been facing shortages of police officers, jailers, and telecommunicators. The demand for police officers and jailers is high, but the number of people choosing to join these professions is declining. U.S. military veterans are a natural choice to help staff these positions as there are many veterans in Texas who are currently unemployed or otherwise lack quality employment. Veterans require additional avenues for gainful employment, especially considering many do not have college degrees. Veterans are trained to work well in a unit, have excellent communication skills, and can operate under stress, which makes them a natural fit for these positions. C.S.H.B. 1152 seeks to allow for a greater number of military veterans to be hired as law enforcement officers in Texas by authorizing legal permanent residents who have been honorably discharged from the U.S. armed forces after at least two years of service to be hired to hold any position that requires a license issued by the Texas Commission of Law Enforcement.

### **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. 1152 amends the Local Government Code to authorize a political subdivision that appoints or employs a person to hold a position that requires the person to be licensed by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) to appoint or employ to hold that position a legal permanent U.S. resident who is an honorably discharged U.S. armed forces veteran with at least two years of service before discharge and who holds the appropriate license issued by TCOLE.

C.S.H.B. 1152 amends the Occupations Code to require TCOLE to issue a license to such a person if they meet the applicable requirements for the license under state law and TCOLE rules. The bill revises the preemployment procedures for law enforcement agencies to require an agency seeking to hire an honorably discharged U.S. armed forces veteran with at least two years of service before discharge as a law enforcement officer on or after December 1, 2023, to submit to TCOLE before hiring the officer confirmation that the hiring agency, to the best of its ability, obtained and reviewed proof of legal permanent residence. The bill requires TCOLE, not later than December 1, 2023, to amend rules as necessary to comply with these provisions.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2023.

**COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE**

While C.S.H.B. 1152 may differ from the introduced in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute expands the scope of the bill's provisions. Whereas the introduced provided only for the licensing and hiring of legal permanent residents as peace officers, the substitute provides instead for the licensing and hiring of legal permanent residents to fill any position that requires a TCOLE-issued license. Moreover, the substitute includes a provision absent from the introduced conditioning the ability of a legal permanent resident to hold such a position on the person having had a minimum of two years of service before discharge.

The substitute includes a provision absent from the introduced revising the preemployment procedures for law enforcement agencies.

Whereas the introduced required TCOLE to amend rules as necessary to comply with the bill's Occupation Code provisions as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date, the substitute imposes a December 1, 2023, deadline for TCOLE to do so.