

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
88R5869 KBB-D

H.B. 1486
By: Gerdes et al. (Whitmire)
Criminal Justice
5/17/2023
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The 87th Legislature enacted S.B. 1359, which requires law enforcement agencies to develop and adopt a mental health leave policy for peace officers who experienced a traumatic event while on duty. However, telecommunicators were not included among the officers required to be covered by those policies, despite the fact that telecommunicators also experience traumatic events.

Law enforcement agencies should include telecommunicators in their mental health leave policies since telecommunicators also experience traumatic event while on duty.

H.B. 1486 would require a law enforcement agency, state agency, or political subdivision that employs a full-time telecommunicator to develop and adopt a policy allowing full-time telecommunicators who experience a traumatic event in the scope of that employment to use mental health leave. The bill subjects a telecommunicator leave policy to the requirements and content provisions of a mental health leave policy adopted by the law enforcement or employing agency of the peace officers.

H.B. 1486 amends current law relating to the adoption of a mental health leave policy for certain telecommunicators.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 614.015, Government Code, as follows:

Sec. 614.015. New heading: MENTAL HEALTH LEAVE FOR PEACE OFFICERS AND TELECOMMUNICATORS. (a) Defines "telecommunicator" and makes a nonsubstantive change.

(b) Requires each law enforcement agency, and each agency of the state or of a political subdivision of the state that employs a full-time telecommunicator, to develop and adopt a policy allowing the use of mental health leave by the peace officers and full-time telecommunicators, as applicable, employed by the agency who experience a traumatic event in the scope of that employment.

(c) Requires that a mental health leave policy adopted under this section:

(1) provide clear and objective guidelines establishing the circumstances under which a telecommunicator is granted and is authorized to use mental health leave;

(2) entitle a telecommunicator to mental health leave without a deduction in salary or other compensation;

(3) enumerate the number of mental health leave days available to a telecommunicator; and

(4) detail the level of anonymity for a telecommunicator who takes mental health leave.

Makes nonsubstantive changes.

(d) Authorizes a mental health leave policy adopted under this section to provide a list of mental health services available to telecommunicators in the area of the law enforcement or employing agency. Makes a nonsubstantive change.

SECTION 2. Requires each agency required to adopt a mental health leave policy under Section 614.015, Government Code, as amended by this Act, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, to adopt a mental health leave policy as prescribed by that section.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2023.