

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1516
By: Wilson
Defense & Veterans' Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Chapter 423 of the Government Code generally prohibits the use of drones in capturing images, with certain exceptions, including for certain compelling government interests. The U.S. military is currently allowed to use drones for operations, exercises, and missions, however the Texas military forces are not. The Texas military forces have mission-ready plans to use drones for search and recovery missions after natural disasters and for monitoring the Texas-Mexico border as part of Operation Border Star. However, under current law these plans are unable to be carried out. H.B. 1516 seeks to authorize the Texas military forces to capture images using unmanned aircraft, such as drones, as part of an operation, exercise, or mission.

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. 1516 amends the Government Code, with respect to the circumstances under which it is lawful to capture an image using an unmanned aircraft in Texas, to include as a lawfully captured image an image captured as part of an operation, exercise, or mission of the Texas military forces.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2023.