

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1521
By: Ordaz
Transportation
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, an estimated 100,000 dogs are killed each year from the cargo area of pickup trucks. The Texas Police Association warns that any sudden start, stop, or turn may toss a pet onto the highway where it can get hit by oncoming traffic. This is a safety hazard for all vehicles on the road, especially in highly congested areas of the highway where there is less time to react. These unsecured animals often become a distraction to other drivers, which may impair their judgment, cause unnecessary collisions or accidents, and further endanger all vehicles on the road. C.S.H.B. 1521 seeks to discourage the unsafe transportation of dogs by prohibiting a person from operating a vehicle or trailer with an unsecured dog in the bed of the vehicle or trailer on a freeway with a speed limit of 60 mph or more in certain counties.

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. 1521 amends the Transportation Code to prohibit a person from operating an open-bed pickup or open flatbed truck or drawing an open flatbed trailer on a freeway with a speed limit of 60 mph or more in a county with a population of more than 500,000 when a dog is occupying the bed of the truck or trailer unless such a dog is secured in a crate, cage, or other closed container and the crate, cage, or container is securely attached to the walls or bed of the truck or trailer.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.

COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 1521 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.

Whereas the introduced's prohibition against transporting dogs in open beds applied to a vehicle being operated or a trailer being drawn on a highway or street with a speed limit of 30 mph or

more, the prohibition in the substitute applies to a vehicle being operated or a trailer being drawn on a freeway with a speed limit of 60 mph or more.