BILL ANALYSIS

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The state's 9-1-1 call takers and dispatchers are essential community workers who are often the first point of contact for a person in an emergency situation. Although they are critical to emergency operations, 9-1-1 call takers and dispatchers do not have mandatory standard guidelines for training. And, with little research available regarding how 9-1-1 call takers and dispatchers gather and relay information, it is difficult to determine if current training protocols are adequate, efficient, or effective. S.B. 496 seeks to address this issue by requiring the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement, in consultation with Texas A&M Engineering Extension Services, to study how 9-1-1 call takers and dispatchers are trained to identify, classify, and communicate information. This would allow for the development of evidence-based training that would result in more accurate situational analysis, improve resource utilization, and promote better outcomes for persons requiring emergency assistance.

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

S.B. 496 requires the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE), in consultation with the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service, to conduct a study to identify potential improvements to training provided to 9-1-1 emergency service call takers and dispatchers. In conducting the study, TCOLE must consider the following:

- the effectiveness of current training provided to 9-1-1 emergency service call takers and dispatchers on communicating accurate information to law enforcement officers; and
- potential improvements to the training to ensure 9-1-1 emergency service call takers and dispatchers are accurately identifying, classifying, and communicating information.

The bill authorizes TCOLE, in conducting the study, to collaborate with law enforcement agencies, community representatives, and other interested parties. The bill requires TCOLE, not later than September 1, 2024, to prepare and submit to the legislature a written report containing the study results and any recommendations for legislative or other action. The bill's provisions expire September 1, 2025.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.