

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 763
By: Middleton
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Public schools are currently in need of additional qualified individuals to counsel their students. Despite the fact that chaplains are trained in skills necessary to provide such counseling, school districts do not have the explicit authority to hire chaplains. S.B. 763 seeks to address this issue by authorizing public school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to employ a chaplain or accept a chaplain as a volunteer.

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. 763 amends the Education Code to authorize a public school district or open-enrollment charter school to employ or accept as a volunteer a chaplain to provide support, services, and programs for students as assigned by the board of trustees of the district or the governing body of the school. Such a chaplain is not required to be certified by the State Board for Educator Certification. The bill requires each district board of trustees and each charter school governing body to take a record vote not later than six months after the bill's effective date on whether to adopt a policy authorizing a campus of the district or school to employ or accept as a volunteer a chaplain.

S.B. 763 includes costs associated with certain support, services, and programs provided by chaplains among the costs for which funds from the school safety allotment may be used.

S.B. 763 applies beginning with the 2023-2024 school year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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