

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1112
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Business & Commerce
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Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

State agencies must have explicit authority from the legislature to conduct background checks on state employees. Currently, the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) does not have this ability. Some PUC personnel have access to critical information related to the Texas electric grid, and a background check is a simple tool to ensure that PUC staff does not immediately present a safety risk. In order to protect Texas' electric grid, S.B. 1112 allows the PUC to conduct background checks on employees. The bill also requires the PUC to conduct background checks on potential employees who will have access to confidential information related to the grid or verify the employee holds an occupational license and passed a background check before the license was issued.

(Original Author's/Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

S.B. 1112 amends current law relating to access to criminal history record information by the Public Utility Commission of Texas.

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 Subchapter F, Chapter 411, Government Code, by adding Section 411.14031, as follows:

Sec. 411.14031. ACCESS TO CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD INFORMATION: PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF TEXAS. (a) Provides that the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) is entitled to obtain from the Department of Public Safety of the State of Texas (DPS) criminal history record information maintained by DPS that relates to a person undergoing a background and criminal history check under Section 12.107, Utilities Code.

(b) Provides that criminal history record information obtained under Subsection (a):

(1) is for the exclusive use of the PUC and is privileged and confidential; and

(2) is prohibited from being released or disclosed to any person or agency except on court order or with the consent of the person who is the subject of the information.

(c) Authorizes the PUC to destroy criminal history record information obtained under Subsection (a) after the information is used for the purpose authorized by this section.

(d) Provides that this section does not prohibit the PUC from obtaining and using criminal history record information as provided by other law.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 12, Utilities Code, by adding Section 12.107, as follows:

Sec. 12.107. CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS FOR CERTAIN EMPLOYEES. Authorizes the PUC, before hiring a person as an employee, to obtain from DPS or a private vendor all criminal history record information relating to the prospective employee.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2023.