BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1484
By: Creighton
Homeland Security & Public Safety
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

According to a March 2023 press release from Governor Abbott, since its inception, Operation Lone Star has resulted in over 355,000 illegal migrant apprehensions, more than 23,000 felony charges, and the seizure of 366 million lethal fentanyl doses. In recent years, the southern border crisis has been exacerbated with global economic and social conditions worsening, particularly in Central America. This has resulted in an influx of unauthorized migrant crossings that is putting strain on local law enforcement agencies across Texas. Local law enforcement agencies, especially those along the border, have not received adequate assistance from the state or federal government to address their role in handling border security matters. Furthermore, a lack of specific border security training for local law enforcement has resulted in an unclear direction for law enforcement response. S.B. 1484 seeks to address this issue by establishing a border operations training program for peace officers employed by local law enforcement agencies.

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. 1484 amends the Government Code to require the Department of Public Safety (DPS), in coordination with local law enforcement agencies, to establish and administer a border operations training program for peace officers employed by such agencies that will prepare officers to collaborate and cooperate with and assist the following:
- any law enforcement agency in the interdiction, investigation, and prosecution of criminal activity in the Texas-Mexico border region; and
- district attorneys, county attorneys, the border prosecution unit, and other prosecutors in the investigation and prosecution of allegations of criminal activity in the border region.

S.B. 1484 requires the training program to include the following:
- information on criminal activity occurring along the Texas-Mexico border, including drug trafficking, trafficking of persons, and other activity conducted by cartels, transnational gangs, and other groups engaged in organized criminal activity;
- information on methods for identifying northbound, southbound, and intrastate criminal activity associated with drug trafficking, trafficking of persons, and other organized criminal activity;
- best practices for investigating and prosecuting the previously described criminal activity and securing the border; and

- an overview of DPS operations at the border, including any collaboration with U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

S.B. 1484 requires DPS to identify opportunities for peace officers employed by local law enforcement agencies to assist in DPS's duties related to border operations and authorizes DPS to authorize such an officer to assist in carrying out those duties. The bill establishes that such an officer is not entitled to compensation from DPS for the assistance provided and authorizes DPS to partner with federal agencies in administering the training program and facilitating this peace officer assistance.

S.B. 1484 amends the Occupations Code to authorize the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement to recognize, or with DPS consent administer or assist in administering, the border operations training program as a continuing education program for law enforcement officers and credit an officer who successfully completes the program with the appropriate number of continuing education hours.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.