

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
89R6425 SCF-F

H.B. 1593
By: Campos et al. (Middleton)
Local Government
5/7/2025
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The International Association of Fire Fighters Center for Excellence states that eight percent of professional firefighters have had suicidal thoughts. Post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, is a compensable illness under workers compensation in Texas for firefighters and police. Unfortunately, there has not been a consistent plan in Texas on how to find healthcare professionals that can identify this disorder early and treat it. Texas firefighters generally have access to health insurance and workers compensation, but connecting the firefighter to these mental health treatment options has been difficult. More firefighters still die by suicide than in the line of duty. Peer support is an often-used tactic to help identify mental illness in the fire service, but it is ineffective in most circumstances and the programs are not staffed by licensed medical professionals.

H.B. 1593 seeks to address this issue by establishing a study group to advise the legislature on future legislation regarding suicide prevention and peer support for firefighters.

As proposed, S.B. 1131 amends current law relating to an advisory committee to study suicide prevention and peer support programs in fire departments in this state.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Commission on Fire Protection in SECTION 2 of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS. Defines "advisory committee," "commission," "fire department," and "fire fighter."

SECTION 2. ADVISORY COMMITTEE. (a) Requires the Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP) to establish an advisory committee to study the need to implement suicide prevention and peer support programs in fire departments in this state. Provides that the committee is composed of certain members.

(b) Requires the advisory committee to designate a member of the committee as chair of the committee.

(c) Authorizes TCFP to adopt rules necessary to carry out the purpose and duties of the advisory committee under this Act.

(d) Requires TCFP to provide administrative support and resources necessary for the advisory committee to carry out the purpose and duties of the committee under this Act.

(e) Authorizes the advisory committee to meet in person or by telephone conference, videoconference, or other electronic means.

SECTION 3. REPORT. Requires the advisory committee, not later than September 1, 2026, to prepare and submit a report to the governor and the legislature. Requires that the report provide an overview of suicide prevention and peer support groups in fire departments, address possible

licensing requirements and any confidentiality concerns, and provide recommendations on the need for legislation to implement suicide prevention and peer support groups in fire departments, whether to encourage local governments to develop local suicide prevention and peer support groups in fire departments, and specific programs to be implemented in this state.

SECTION 4. EXPIRATION DATE. Provides that the advisory committee is abolished and this Act expires January 10, 2027.

SECTION 5. Effective date: September 1, 2025.