

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1593
By: Campos
Intergovernmental Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The International Association of Fire Fighters Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health Treatment and Recovery states that eight percent of professional firefighters have had suicidal thoughts. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a compensable illness under workers compensation in Texas for firefighters and police. The bill author has informed the committee that while Texas firefighters generally have access to health insurance and workers compensation, there is not currently a statewide strategy for firefighters to find health care professionals that can identify and treat PTSD in early stages. 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.

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

ANALYSIS

H.B. 1593 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 Texas fire departments. The bill sets out the composition of the 11-member advisory committee as follows:

- two fire fighters and one licensed provider of mental health services, appointed by the Texas State Association of Fire Fighters;
- two fire fighters and one licensed provider of mental health services, appointed by the State Firefighters' and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas;
- two fire chiefs and one licensed provider of mental health services, appointed by the Texas Fire Chiefs Association;
- one person, appointed by the executive director of the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service; and
- the executive director of TCFP.

With respect to the administration of the advisory committee, the bill does the following:

- requires the committee to designate a committee member as chair;
- authorizes TCFP to adopt rules to carry out the committee's purpose and duties;
- requires TCFP to provide administrative support and resources necessary for the committee to do so; and
- authorizes the committee to meet in person or by telephone conference, videoconference, or other electronic means.

H.B. 1593 requires the advisory committee, not later than September 1, 2026, to prepare and submit a report to the governor and the legislature. The report must do the following:

- 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 such groups in fire departments; and
 - specific programs to be implemented in Texas.

The advisory committee is abolished and the bill's provisions expire January 10, 2027.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.