

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1696
By: Canales
Homeland Security, Public Safety & Veterans' Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Under current law, an individual who has a handgun license and a driver's license must present both licenses when identification is requested by a magistrate or a peace officer if the individual is carrying a handgun on or about their person. The author has informed the committee that this dual document system can lead to unnecessary administrative complexity and redundancy for both citizens and law enforcement. H.B. 1696 seeks to make it easier for Texans to show proof of having a handgun license by allowing an applicant for such a license to opt in to having their proof of licensure added to their driver's license or commercial driver's license.

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 Department of Public Safety in SECTION 2 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 1696 amends the Government Code to require the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to adopt rules not later than December 1, 2025, allowing an applicant for an original, duplicate, modified, or renewed handgun license who submits the application on or after January 1, 2026, in addition to being issued the license, to elect to include on the person's driver's license or commercial driver's license (CDL) a designation indicating that the person is licensed to carry a handgun. The rules must include procedures to ensure that a person who makes such an election:

- receives the designation only if they meet the requirements for issuance of the original, duplicate, modified, or renewed handgun license; and
- maintains the designation only during the period for which they are licensed to carry a handgun.

H.B. 1696 amends the Transportation Code to require DPS to include on each driver's license or CDL issued to a handgun license holder who makes such an election a designation that shows the person is licensed to carry a handgun and that includes their handgun license number and a statement of the period for which the handgun license is effective. This requirement applies only with respect to a driver's license or CDL issued or renewed on or after January 1, 2026.

H.B. 1696 amends the Government Code to revise the requirement for a handgun license holder who is carrying a handgun on or about their person when a magistrate or a peace officer demands that they display identification to display both their DPS-issued driver's license or identification certificate and their handgun license as follows:

- includes a CDL among the forms of identification the license holder may provide along with their handgun license; and
- gives the license holder the option to display instead only their driver's license or CDL that includes the handgun license designation.

H.B. 1696 amends the Business & Commerce Code to make a conforming change.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.