

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 384
By: Flores
Culture, Recreation & Tourism
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In 1981, the 67th Texas Legislature created the Operation Game Thief (OGT) committee and the OGT fund for the purpose of making reward payments to individuals who provide information relating to violations of state law for the taking, possession, or sale of certain game. The bill sponsor has informed the committee that the OGT program is the state's wildlife crime-stoppers program and is a highly successful function of the law enforcement division of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, offering rewards of up to \$1,000 for information leading to the conviction of a wildlife crime. As provided by current law, the OGT program is privately funded and dependent on financial support from the public. S.B. 384 seeks to provide a means of support for this program and assist in obtaining information leading to the arrest and conviction of poachers by allowing those applying for a hunting or fishing license to voluntarily contribute money to the OGT fund.

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. 384 amends the Parks and Wildlife Code to authorize an applicant for a hunting or fishing license of any type under that code, including a combination hunting and fishing license, to make a donation of \$1, \$5, \$10, or \$20 to the operation game thief fund when applying for the license. The bill requires the Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to do the following:

- include space on the first page of each hunting or fishing license application that allows an applicant to indicate that the applicant is donating \$1, \$5, \$10, or \$20 to that fund;
- provide an opportunity for a hunting or fishing license applicant to make such a donation to the fund through TPWD's website; and
- deposit the donations in the fund not later than the 14th day of each month.

The bill authorizes TPWD, before depositing the money, to deduct money equal to the amount of reasonable expenses for developing and administering the bill's provisions. The bill caps the amount of money that TPWD may deduct at three percent of the amount deposited.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2025.