

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
89R9975 MEW-F

S.B. 1980
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Criminal Justice
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Across Texas, peace officers, parole officers, and emergency personnel put themselves at risk daily while performing critical public safety duties. However, current laws do not impose sufficiently strong penalties on individuals who assault or interfere with these public servants, leading to rising incidents of violence and disruptions in their work. Without stronger legal deterrents, offenders face relatively minor consequences, leaving first responders, law enforcement, and other officials vulnerable to attacks and obstruction while on duty.

Texas has a duty to strengthen protections for public servants by raising penalties for assault and broadening the definition of interference, helping ensure safer working conditions for those who enforce Texas laws and provide emergency services.

This Bill Would:

- Increase the criminal penalty for assaulting a peace officer, parole officer, or community supervision officer while they are performing official duties;
- Presume that the offender knew the victim was a public servant if they were wearing a distinctive uniform or badge;
- Expand the definition of interference with public duties to include disrupting parole officers and community supervision officers; and
- Establish a rebuttable presumption that intentionally publishing the personal information of law enforcement officers or their families constitutes interference with their official duties.

As proposed, S.B. 1980 amends current law relating to increasing the criminal penalty for the offense of assault committed against certain public servants and to the prosecution of the criminal offense of interference with public duties of those public servants.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Sections 22.01(c) and (d), Penal Code, as follows:

(c) Provides that an offense under certain provisions of Section 22.01 (Assault) is a Class C misdemeanor, except that the offense is:

(1)-(2) makes no changes to these subdivisions;

(3) a Class B misdemeanor if the offense is committed against a person the actor knows is:

(A) a peace officer, a community supervision and corrections department officer, or a parole officer while the officer is performing a duty or exercising authority imposed or granted by law; or

(B) emergency services personnel while the person is providing emergency services; or

(4) redesignates existing Subdivision (3) as Subdivision (4) and makes no further changes.

(d) Provides that, for purposes of Subsections (b) (relating to providing that certain offenses are a felony of the third degree if the offense is committed against certain persons) and (c), the act is presumed to have known the person assaulted was a public servant, including a public servant described by Subsection (c)(3)(A), a security officer, or emergency services personnel if the person was wearing a distinctive uniform or badge indicating the person's employment as a public servant or status as a security officer or emergency services personnel. Makes a nonsubstantive change.

SECTION 2. Amends Sections 38.15(a) and (d-1), Penal Code, as follows:

(a) Provides that a person commits an offense if the person with criminal negligence interrupts, disrupts, impedes, or otherwise interferes with certain persons, including a peace officer, a community supervision and corrections department officer, or a parole officer while the officer is performing a duty or exercising authority imposed or granted by law. Makes a nonsubstantive change.

(d-1) Makes a conforming change to this subsection.

SECTION 3. Makes application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2025.