

By: Holt

H.B. No. 3626

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to coroners, including certain state benefits and awards  
and membership on the First Responder Advisory Council.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 421.041(b), Government Code, is amended  
to read as follows:

(b) The council is composed of:

(1) one representative for each of the following  
sectors of the state, appointed by the governor or the governor's  
designee:

(A) law enforcement;

(B) firefighters;

(C) private first responders; ~~and~~

(D) emergency medical services; and

(E) coroners, as represented by a justice of the  
peace or medical examiner required to conduct inquests under  
Chapter 49, Code of Criminal Procedure; and

(2) other members, as determined by the governor or  
the governor's designee.

SECTION 2. Section 615.003, Government Code, is amended to  
read as follows:

Sec. 615.003. APPLICABILITY. This chapter applies only to  
eligible survivors of the following individuals:

(1) an individual:

1 (A) elected, appointed, or employed as a peace  
2 officer by the state or a political subdivision of the state under  
3 Article 2A.001, Code of Criminal Procedure, or other law; or

4 (B) employed as a peace officer by a private  
5 institution of higher education, including a private junior  
6 college, that is located in this state under Section 51.212,  
7 Education Code;

8 (2) a paid probation officer appointed by the director  
9 of a community supervision and corrections department who has the  
10 duties set out in Section 76.002 and the qualifications set out in  
11 Section 76.005, or who was appointed in accordance with prior law;

12 (3) a parole officer employed by the Texas Department  
13 of Criminal Justice who has the duties set out in Section 508.001  
14 and the qualifications set out in Section 508.113 or in prior law;

15 (4) a paid jailer;

16 (5) a member of an organized police reserve or  
17 auxiliary unit who regularly assists peace officers in enforcing  
18 criminal laws;

19 (6) a member of the class of employees of the  
20 correctional institutions division formally designated as  
21 custodial personnel under Section 615.006 by the Texas Board of  
22 Criminal Justice or its predecessor in function;

23 (7) a jailer or guard of a county jail who is appointed  
24 by the sheriff and who:

25 (A) performs a security, custodial, or  
26 supervisory function over the admittance, confinement, or  
27 discharge of prisoners; and

(B) is certified by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement;

(8) a juvenile correctional employee of the Texas Juvenile Justice Department;

(9) an employee of the Department of Aging and Disability Services or Department of State Health Services who:

(A) works at the department's maximum security unit; or

(B) performs on-site services for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice;

(10) an individual who is employed by the state or a political or legal subdivision and is subject to certification by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection;

(11) an individual employed by the state or a political or legal subdivision whose principal duties are aircraft crash and rescue fire fighting;

(12) a member of an organized volunteer fire-fighting unit that:

(A) renders fire-fighting services without remuneration; and

(B) conducts a minimum of two drills each month, each two hours long;

(13) an individual who:

(A) performs emergency medical services or operates an ambulance;

(B) is employed by a political subdivision of the state or is an emergency medical services volunteer as defined by

1 Section 773.003, Health and Safety Code; and

2 (C) is qualified as an emergency care attendant  
3 or at a higher level of training under Section 773.046, 773.047,  
4 773.048, 773.049, or 773.0495, Health and Safety Code;

5 (14) an individual who is employed or formally  
6 designated as a chaplain for:

7 (A) an organized volunteer fire-fighting unit or  
8 other fire department of this state or of a political subdivision of  
9 this state;

10 (B) a law enforcement agency of this state or of a  
11 political subdivision of this state; or

12 (C) the Texas Department of Criminal Justice;

13 (15) an individual who is employed by the state or a  
14 political subdivision of the state and who is considered by the  
15 governmental employer to be a trainee for a position otherwise  
16 described by this section;

17 (16) an individual who is employed by the Department  
18 of Public Safety and, as certified by the director, is:

19 (A) deployed into the field in direct support of  
20 a law enforcement operation, including patrol, investigative,  
21 search and rescue, crime scene, on-site communications, or special  
22 operations; and

23 (B) given a special assignment in direct support  
24 of operations relating to organized crime, criminal interdiction,  
25 border security, counterterrorism, intelligence, traffic  
26 enforcement, emergency management, regulatory services, or special  
27 investigations; ~~or~~

1           (17) an individual who is employed by the Parks and  
2 Wildlife Department and, as certified by the executive director of  
3 the Parks and Wildlife Department, is:

4           (A) deployed into the field in direct support of  
5 a law enforcement operation, including patrol, investigative,  
6 search and rescue, crime scene, on-site communications, or special  
7 operations; and

8           (B) given a special assignment in direct support  
9 of operations relating to organized crime, criminal interdiction,  
10 border security, counterterrorism, intelligence, traffic  
11 enforcement, emergency management, regulatory services, or special  
12 investigations; or

13           (18) a justice of the peace or medical examiner  
14 required to conduct inquests under Chapter 49, Code of Criminal  
15 Procedure, or a death investigator or employee who assists the  
16 justice of the peace or medical examiner.

17       SECTION 3. Section 3106.001, Government Code, is amended by  
18 amending Subdivision (1) and adding Subdivision (1-a) to read as  
19 follows:

20           (1) "Coroner" means a justice of the peace or medical  
21 examiner required to conduct inquests under Chapter 49, Code of  
22 Criminal Procedure, or a death investigator or employee who assists  
23 the justice of the peace or medical examiner.

24           (1-a) "Emergency medical first responder" means an  
25 employee or volunteer of the state, a political subdivision, or an  
26 emergency medical services provider who provides urgent on-site  
27 medical care to the sick or injured.

SECTION 4. Chapter 3106, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 3106.0045 to read as follows:

Sec. 3106.0045. CORONERS' STAR OF TEXAS AWARD. (a) The Coroners' Star of Texas Award shall be awarded to:

(1) each coroner who is seriously injured in the line of duty; and

(2) the surviving next of kin of each coroner who is killed or sustains a fatal injury in the line of duty.

(b) The Coroners' Star of Texas Award Advisory Committee shall advise the governor on the issuance, design, and presentation of the Coroners' Star of Texas Award.

(c) The committee consists of three current or retired coroners appointed by the governor.

SECTION 5. The change in law made by this Act to Chapter 615, Government Code, applies only in relation to a death that occurs on or after the effective date of this Act. Matters regarding eligibility, payment, and benefits under Chapter 615, Government Code, in relation to a death that occurs before the effective date of this Act are governed by the law in effect when the death occurs, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 6. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.