

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 981
By: Wray
Homeland Security & Public Safety
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties contend that the Private Security Act restricts a place of religious worship from creating a volunteer security patrol without meeting expensive and stringent licensing requirements. H.B. 981 seeks to address this issue by exempting certain persons providing security services at an established place of religious worship from that act and authorizing those persons to carry a handgun on the premises of the applicable place of worship under certain conditions.

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

H.B. 981 amends the Occupations Code to prohibit a person while serving as a member of a volunteer safety group from wearing a uniform, badge, patch, or other item that would give the member the appearance of being a peace officer, personal protection officer, or security officer or from carrying an object displaying a word or phrase that would give the person the appearance of being a peace officer, personal protection officer, or security officer. The bill exempts from the Private Security Act a person who complies with that prohibition and who is approved by the leadership of a church, synagogue, or other established place of religious worship to provide security services on the premises of the place of religious worship as a member of a volunteer safety group.

H.B. 981 amends the Government Code to authorize a person who is providing security services to a church, synagogue, or other established place of religious worship as a member of a volunteer safety group of that place of religious worship and who is licensed to carry a handgun to carry a handgun on the premises of the applicable place of religious worship only on approval by the leadership of the place of religious worship.

H.B. 981 amends the Penal Code to exempt from the application of the offense of unlawful carrying of a handgun by a handgun license holder a handgun license holder who is providing security services to a church, synagogue, or other established place of religious worship as a member of a volunteer safety group of the place of religious worship and who has been approved to carry a handgun by the leadership of the place of religious worship.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2017.