

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 974
By: Metcalf
Public Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

There have been calls to implement measures directed at enhancing and ensuring school safety. C.S.H.B. 974 seeks to do this by increasing the frequency with which safety and security audits are conducted by public school districts and public junior colleges and standardizing public school district entry procedures for certain visitors to district campuses.

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

C.S.H.B. 974 amends the Education Code to increase the minimum frequency with which each public school district or public junior college district is required to conduct a safety and security audit of the district's facilities from every three years to every two years. The bill replaces the authorizations for a public school district to require a person who enters a district campus to display the person's driver's license or another form of identification containing the person's photograph issued by a governmental entity and to verify whether a campus visitor is a registered sex offender with requirements for a district to do so and specifies that these requirements apply with respect to a person who enters or visits a district campus for a purpose other than attending a school-sponsored event that is open to the public. The bill authorizes a district to verify whether a person who visits a district campus to attend a school-sponsored event that is open to the public is a sex offender registered with the Department of Public Safety database or any other database accessible by the district. The bill applies beginning with the 2019-2020 school year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2019.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 974 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute includes an authorization for a district to verify whether a visitor to a district

campus for a school-sponsored event is a registered sex offender.