

SUBJECT: Licensing of peace officers trained outside of Texas

COMMITTEE: Public Safety — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 6 ayes — B. Turner, Berman, Carter, Gutierrez, Hupp, Najera
0 nays
3 absent — Keel, Driver, P. King

WITNESSES: For — None
Against — None
On — Wayne Green, Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education

BACKGROUND: Texas peace officers must be licensed by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education (TCLEOSE). Officers must complete 570 hours of basic training, including about 170 hours on Texas-specific laws and procedures.

Officers in other states receive between 280 and 1,032 hours of training. If an officer from another state transfers to Texas, the officer can petition to bypass the required 570 hours of basic training and the full licensing test. If TCLEOSE finds on review that the officer's training was equivalent to what Texas training would have been, the officer may be allowed to take only the 170 hours of Texas-specific training and a licensing test only on those topics. Every state except Hawaii accepts other states' basic training on the basis of reciprocity.

DIGEST: CSHB 1870 would amend the Government Code, sec. 415.052 to prohibit TCLEOSE from granting a license to a person previously employed as a peace officer in another state unless that person had completed in the other state a basic training program equivalent to the one administered by TCLEOSE, as well as a supplemental training course approved or established by the commission that is specific to Texas law and procedure.

The bill would repeal the current provision allowing TCLEOSE to consider employment as a peace officer in another state in determining whether a person was required to have additional training or testing for reactivation of a license after a break in employment.

The bill would take effect September 1, 1999.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHB 1870 would require officers trained outside of Texas to take about 170 hours of supplemental training in Texas-specific issues before receiving a Texas peace officer license. Out-of-state officers also would have to take other training if the officer's basic training in the other state was not substantially equivalent to that required in Texas. Officers transferring from out of state could be ignorant of Texas laws or procedures or their basic training may be inferior. This bill would ensure that they are familiar with Texas issues before being licensed in Texas. By ensuring the competence of Texas peace officers, it would help protect public safety.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

Laws and procedures are similar in all states. Officers who have trained in other states actually may have gone through more stringent training than they would have received in Texas. Therefore, requiring supplemental training for these officers is unnecessary.

**OTHER
OPPONENTS
SAY:**

Federal officers should be exempt from the bill and should not have to take the supplemental Texas-specific training.

NOTES:

The committee substitute would specify that officers transferring from out of state must have had training substantially equivalent to what they would have received in Texas. It added the requirement that an officer transferring from another state would have to take supplemental Texas-specific training.