

SUBJECT: Amending continuing education requirements for peace officers and jailers

COMMITTEE: Public Safety — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — B. Turner, Keel, Berman, Carter, Driver, Gutierrez, Hupp, P. King, Najera
0 nays

WITNESSES: None

BACKGROUND: Government Code, sec. 415.034 requires the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education (TCLEOSE) to recognize, prepare, or administer continuing education programs for officers and county jailers. The commission requires every state, county, special district, or municipal agency that appoints or employs peace officers to provide each peace officer with a continuing education training program every 24 months. The course may not exceed 40 hours, and not less than 20 hours must be on topics selected by the agency.

Additional continuing education is required every 24 months. This training includes civil rights, racial sensitivity, and cultural diversity. If consistent with the officer's duties, the continuing education also includes recognition of cases that involve child abuse, child neglect, family violence, and sexual assault.

DIGEST: HB 2673 would require that the additional continuing education required by TCLEOSE be offered every 48 months. It also would specify that TCLEOSE could not require the length of the additional training to exceed 20 hours.

The bill would specify that additional training could include topics on issues concerning sex-offender characteristics and the documentation of child abuse, child neglect, family violence, and sexual assault cases.

The bill would remove the requirement that additional training include civil rights, racial sensitivity, and cultural diversity.

The bill would allow TCLEOSE to suspend the license of a peace officer who failed to complete this continuing education at least once every 48 months.

TCLEOSE would have to establish the curricula for the amended continuing education training programs by January 1, 2000. For peace officers licensed on September 1, 1999, a course required every 24 months would have to be completed by September 1, 2001, and a course required every 48 months would have to be completed by September 1, 2003.

This bill would take effect on September 1, 1999.