

SUBJECT: Funding and administration for the Department of Public Safety museum

COMMITTEE: Public Safety — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 5 ayes — B. Turner, Berman, Hupp, Isett, P. King,

1 nay — Driver

3 absent — Keel, Gutierrez, Villarreal

WITNESSES: For — B.C. Lyon, DPS Historical Museum and Research Center

Against — None

BACKGROUND: The Department of Public Safety (DPS) is the primary state law enforcement agency in Texas. In 1994, retired and active DPS employees created the DPS Historical Museum and Research Center in Austin. The museum's collection currently is on display in the DPS training academy and headquarters.

DIGEST: CSHB 335 would amend the Government and Transportation Codes to authorize the Public Safety Commission (PSC) to establish a DPS-paid support staff for the museum, to use DPS property for the museum, and to enter into a contract with the museum.

CSHB 335 would create a special museum account outside the state treasury that would be held at the DPS Credit Union and administered by PSC. The account would be dedicated toward administering the museum.

DPS would allow citizens when they applied or renewed their driver's licenses, identification cards, or commercial driver's licenses or permits to choose to donate \$1 toward the museum. DPS would use similar language to inform applicants of the museum fee as used to inform applicants of any other fee. DPS would remit museum fees collected from applications or renewals to the comptroller, who would be required to deposit the funds into an account and credit DPS for museum fees.

CSHB 335 would take effect September 1, 2001.

SUPPORTERS SAY:	CSHB 335 would provide the DPS museum with an additional source of funding as well as other needed support. Currently the museum does not have a physical building, and it exists off of membership fees and donations. If only 15 percent of license renewals chose to donate \$1 through the optional fee, it would result in more than \$2 million in revenue for the museum. If only 1 percent chose to donate, it still would result in \$140,000 for the museum. This would help the museum in its goal to build a facility on DPS property to honor the memory of fallen officers, teach the public about the history of the department, and educate children on the operations and procedures of public safety law enforcement work.
OPPONENTS SAY:	The funding mechanism established by CSHB 335 would not be appropriate. Currently people going into a DPS office for a driver's license issuance or renewal are asked if they would like to donate an extra dollar for the Blindness Education, Screening, and Treatment Program or the Anatomical Gift Educational Program. If given a third choice, while standing before a DPS employee, of paying an extra dollar to fund the DPS museum, these other two programs could suffer a loss of revenue.
NOTES:	The substitute made several changes to the original including the establishment of an account for the museum under DPS and authorization for the director of DPS to hire support staff funded through the special museum account.