

- SUBJECT:** Providing state compensation to disabled peace officers
- COMMITTEE:** Criminal Jurisprudence — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — Hinojosa, Dunnam, Talton, Garcia, Green, Kitchen, Martinez
Fischer, Shields
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Keel
- WITNESSES:** For — William “Bill” Biles, Waco Police Officers’ Association; Ronald G. DeLord, Combined Law Enforcement Agencies of Texas; Trent Watts;
Registered but did not testify: Cris Andersen, Det. James D. Jones, San Antonio Police Officers’ Association; P. J. Brock, Arlington Police Association; Mark Clark, Houston Police Officers’ Union, Texas Union of Police and Sheriffs, Dallas Police Association, South Texas Organization of Police; Ken Evans, Round Rock Police Officers’ Association; Chris Heaton, Texas Municipal Police Association; Deborah Ingersoll, Texas State Troopers’ Association; Rebecca Radcliff, San Marcos Police Officers’ Association; Stephen Sanders, Texas State Lodge Fraternal Order of Police; Mike Sheffield, Austin Police Association; Charley Wilkison, Combined Law Enforcement Association of Texas, McAllen Professional Police Officers Association
- Against — None
- BACKGROUND:** The state does not provide disability insurance or funds to compensate officers who are injured by a criminal act in the line of duty and are unable to continue their work. Local police departments often provide benefits, but some smaller ones cannot afford disability insurance or to replace lost pay in full.
- Officers have called for a state-funded safety net so that they do not suffer a loss of income in the event that they are seriously injured in the line of duty. It is estimated that three peace officers in Texas currently would be eligible for this type of compensation.

DIGEST: HB 522 would amend the Rights of Crime Victims Act (Code of Criminal Procedure, ch. 56) to provide payments out of the Crime Victims' Compensation Fund to certain disabled peace officers. A peace officer would be defined as a person elected, appointed, or employed to serve as a peace officer for a governmental entity and would include a former peace officer who, because of an injury suffered while performing duties as a peace officer, was entitled to receive payments under this article.

The three-year filing deadline for receiving compensation from the Crime Victims' Compensation Fund would not apply to peace officers injured after August 31, 1989, and before September 2, 2001, as a result of another's criminally injurious conduct while the officer was performing duties as a peace officer. Peace officers injured between those dates would have to file an application by September 1, 2002. This section would expire on September 2, 2002.

HB 522 would be known as the "Bill Biles Law" and would take effect September 1, 2001.