

SUBJECT: Reducing fee for renewing concealed handgun license if 60 or older

COMMITTEE: Law Enforcement — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 6 ayes — Driver, Garza, Hupp, Y. Davis, Hegar, Keel

0 nays

1 present not voting — Burnam

WITNESSES: For — Tara Reilly Mica, National Rifle Association; Albert C. Ross, Texas State Rifle Association, Dallas Arms Collectors Association, and Arlington Sportsman Club; Alice Tripp, Texas State Rifle Association; Marinelle W. Thompson

Against — None

BACKGROUND: Government Code, sec. 411.195 requires the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to reduce by 50 percent the fees for original, duplicate, and modified concealed handgun licenses for applicants who are at least 60 years old.

DIGEST: HB 498 would require DPS to reduce by 50 percent the fees for renewing a concealed handgun license for a person at least 60 years old.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2003.

SUPPORTERS SAY: HB 498 would reduce the fees for concealed handgun license renewals for senior citizens just as the fees are reduced for original, duplicate, and modified licenses for this age group.

There is no reason why a person age 60 or older should be charged full-price for a license renewal when a person in that age range receives a discount on an original, duplicate, or modified license. Elderly Texans, many of whom live on fixed incomes, would appreciate the fee reduction. When the concealed handgun statute was enacted, the intention was for license renewals for people age 60 and older to be treated the same as applications for original and other licenses.

HB 498 would not result in a proliferation of handguns in Texas. The bill would apply to license renewals by people who already are licensed to carry handguns. These people have met all the eligibility requirements and are legally entitled to carry a concealed handgun.

Any reduction in revenue due to HB 498 would be small and easily absorbed by the state.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

The Legislature should do nothing that could increase the number of handguns in Texas. Reducing renewal fees for any group of Texans could lead to more people renewing their concealed handgun licenses and, therefore, more people carrying concealed handguns.

According to the bill's fiscal note, HB 498 would result in a loss of \$773,000 in general revenue during fiscal 2004-05. In view of current fiscal conditions and the budget reductions proposed for the coming biennium, the state cannot afford this loss of revenue.