

**SUBJECT:** Allowing fitness incentive pay for certain fire fighters and police officers

**COMMITTEE:** Urban Affairs — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 6 ayes — Talton, Wong, Menendez, A. Allen, Blake, Rodriguez

0 nays

1 absent — Bailey

**WITNESSES:** None

**BACKGROUND:** Local Government Code sec. 143.041(c) provides that, if applicable, fire fighters and police officers are entitled to longevity or seniority, educational incentive, assignment, certification, and shift differential pay, in addition to their base salaries.

**DIGEST:** HB 1213 would authorize fitness incentive pay in addition to the base salary for fire fighters and police officers.

If criteria for fitness incentive pay were clearly established in writing and applied equally to each fire fighter or police officer, the municipality's governing body could authorize fitness incentive pay for each fire fighter or police officer who succeeded in meeting the criteria.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2005.

**SUPPORTERS SAY:** Physical fitness incentive pay would be similar to educational incentive and longevity pay for which fire fighters and police officers already are eligible. Instead of offering monetary rewards only for receiving more education or staying with the department for an extended length of time, HB 1213 would provide an incentive to maintain high levels of physical fitness.

Those recruited to fire and police academies must pass physical exams and have certain levels of physical fitness. Once admitted to the academies, however, they have no monetary or other incentive to maintain minimum levels of physical fitness during their professional tenure.

Cities would benefit from having police officers and fire fighters in top physical shape, and the bill would allow them to reward those who maintained their level of fitness after admittance to their respective academies.

Providing monetary incentive for fitness would not be mandatory, but would be up to the discretion of each municipality. Municipalities could establish fitness incentive pay programs only if they had sufficient funds to cover the costs.

**OPPONENTS  
SAY:**

This bill is unnecessary. Officers should not need incentive pay to maintain or improve their levels of physical fitness. Because it is beneficial to their job performance for them to maintain high levels of fitness, it should be routine.

There is no similar incentive proposal for other law enforcement officers who also would benefit themselves and those they serve by maintaining certain levels of physical fitness.