

- SUBJECT:** Peace officer employment opportunity website operated by TCLEOSE
- COMMITTEE:** Public Safety — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 7 ayes — Merritt, Frost, Burnam, Driver, P. King, Rodriguez, Vo
0 nays
2 absent — Lewis, Mallory Caraway
- WITNESSES:** For — Charley Wilkison, Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Mark Clark, Houston Police Officers' Union; Randle Meadows, Arlington Police Association; Felix Rendon, San Antonio Police Officers Association)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Timothy Braaten, Brian Roth, Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education)
- BACKGROUND:** The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education (TCLEOSE) licenses, trains, certifies, and disciplines peace officers, county jailers, and telecommunicators.
- DIGEST:** HB 2580 would require TCLEOSE to develop, maintain, and promote, by January 1, 2010, a statewide employment website to publicize peace officer employment opportunities with state and local law enforcement agencies and to facilitate information exchange between these agencies and job-seekers. TCLEOSE would verify, to the extent practicable, the accuracy of information posted on the website and, with the assistance of the Department of Information Resources, ensure the security of data exchanged.

The commission would charge a reasonable fee to law enforcement agencies that used the website to exchange information with job-seekers. TCLEOSE could limit or discontinue operation of the website if the commission lacked sufficient funding to maintain and operate it.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2009.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

The peace officer employment opportunity website required by HB 2580 would be a conduit for peace officer job-seekers to locate job openings at law enforcement agencies across the state and to exchange information securely with the agencies for which they would like to work. Providing this service through TCLEOSE would enable the commission to screen applicants to confirm their initial qualifications.

Rural law enforcement agencies are particularly disadvantaged in locating qualified applicants because they lack the resources that larger agencies have to send recruiters across the state and offer recruitment bonuses to officer candidates. This not only adversely affects the ability of rural law enforcement agencies to find qualified employees but also minimizes the potential that officers in larger cities have to find positions in smaller communities if that is the lifestyle they prefer. HB 2580 would overcome these obstacles so law enforcement agencies all over the state could fulfill their vital role in service to and protection of the public through adequate staffing of competent peace officers.

The website would not cost the state any more in general revenue funds because it would be established from general revenue-dedicated funds already appropriated to TCLEOSE. The 81st Legislature already is considering appropriating funds to implement the recommendations of a December 2008 technology performance review that suggested changing the TCLEOSE website to address the needs of the agency's customers.

If sufficient funding were not available, TCLEOSE would be allowed to limit or cease operation of the website. The website would cost more in fiscal 2010 to get developed and established, but site maintenance in each year that followed would be much less costly for an invaluable resource. The site would be funded, in part, by new revenue from a reasonable fee charged to law enforcement agencies that used the website.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

The LBB estimates that the employment opportunity website required by HB 2580 would cost \$417,000 to develop and maintain in fiscal 2010 and would cost more than \$133,000 in future years. It would be too costly for TCLEOSE to develop and maintain from existing appropriations from the commission's small but critical budget. From these same funds,

TCLEOSE must license and regulate more than 90,000 individuals. Although HB 2580 would permit TCLEOSE to cease website operations if not enough funding were available, the bill still would require TCLEOSE to develop the site, which would be the bulk of the cost. The peace officer employment website recommended by this bill would be an excellent resource, but should be established only if a separate appropriation was made for this project.

NOTES:

The fiscal note indicates the website required by the bill would require one additional TCLEOSE employee per year. LBB estimates that creating and maintaining the website, including the additional employee, would cost \$417,275 in general revenue-dedicated funds from the law officer standards and education account in fiscal 2010 and \$133,104 for maintenance every fiscal year thereafter.