

SUBJECT: Promoting fall prevention awareness

COMMITTEE: Human Services — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — Rose, Herrero, Darby, Elkins, Hernandez, Hughes, Legler,
Naishtat, Walle

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — Carlos Higgins, Texas Silver-Haired Legislature; Jim Hine;
(*Registered, but did not testify*: Derek Daniels, Texas Assisted Living
Providers Advocacy Group; Charles Ewing; Amanda Fredriksen, AARP;
Tim Graves, Texas Health Care Association; Paula Johnson, Texas Silver-
Haired Legislature; Sharon Liggett, Texas Assisted Living Association;
Debbie Mincher, Texas Occupational Therapy Association; Danny
Passmore, Texas Martial Arts Hall of Fame; Glenda Rogers; Denise Rose,
Texas Hospital Association)

Against — None

DIGEST: HB 703 would permit the Department of Aging and Disability Services to
develop recommendations to:

- raise public awareness about fall prevention;
- educate older adults and caretakers of older adults about best practices to reduce the incidence and risk of falls;
- incorporate fall prevention guidelines into state and local planning documents that affect housing, transportation, parks, recreational facilities, and other public facilities;
- encourage state and local governments and the private sector to promote policies and programs that help reduce the incidence of risk of falls ;
- encourage area agencies on aging to include fall prevention education in their services; and
- develop a system for reporting falls to improve available information on falls.

HB 703 also would amend the Human Resources Code to designate the week after the autumnal equinox as “Fall Prevention Awareness Week.”

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:**

HB 703 would help increase awareness of the risk factors associated with falling that increase with age. Research shows that a well designed fall prevention program that includes risk factor assessments, a focused physical activity program, and improvement of the home environment can reduce the incidence of falls by 30 to 50 percent.

About 20 to 30 percent of older adults who fall suffer moderate to severe injuries, resulting in almost 80,000 hospitalizations annually and constituting 40 percent of all nursing home placements.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, the total direct cost of all fall-related injuries in 2000 for people 65 years of age and older exceeded \$19 billion nationwide. Raising awareness would help people and save money.

A fall awareness week would help make older adults and caregivers more aware of the dangers of falls. This greater awareness would decrease the number of falls that can severely diminish the quality of life for older adults.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition