

- SUBJECT:** State trooper maximum salaries at the Department of Public Safety
- COMMITTEE:** Appropriations — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 21 ayes — Pitts, Sylvester Turner, Bell, G. Bonnen, Carter, Crownover, Darby, Giddings, Larry Gonzales, Hughes, S. King, Longoria, Muñoz, Orr, Otto, Patrick, Perry, Price, Raney, Ratliff, Zerwas
- 0 nays
- 6 absent — Ashby, S. Davis, Dukes, Howard, Márquez, McClendon
- WITNESSES:** For — Donald Dickson, Texas State Troopers Association; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Garrett Huling and Carl Parker, Texas State Troopers Association)
- Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Chris Cornell, Reece Albert, Inc.)
- On — Shea Guinn, Game Warden Peace Officers Association; Steven C. McCraw, Department of Public Safety; Harry Nanos, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission Officers Association; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Loretta Doty, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission; Craig Hunter, Texas Parks and Wildlife Law Enforcement)
- BACKGROUND:** Government Code, ch. 654 governs the salary structure for state employment, as specified in the position classification plan now found in Art. 9 of the general appropriations act. The state’s classification officer in the State Auditor’s Office maintains the plan and makes classification plan recommendations to the governor and the Legislature. Salary schedule C currently applies to law enforcement positions at the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 2100 would add Government Code, sec. 411.0162 to enable DPS to annually pay employees in the three lowest state trooper classifications up to 15 percent above the maximum salary designated in salary schedule C.

The bill would take effect immediately if the bill finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2013.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHB 2100 would allow DPS to more effectively recruit state troopers by allowing the department to pay them more at entry-level positions. A recent state auditor's report on the state's law enforcement salary schedule concluded that state trooper salaries are not competitive with salaries for other law enforcement departments in Texas, which has created a recruitment problem for DPS. New state trooper recruits are needed, and state money is currently being wasted training recruits who end up leaving for higher paying jobs in other law enforcement departments.

CSHB 2100 specifically would address trooper trainees, probationary troopers, and Trooper I positions in order to ensure that the state was able to recruit and retain new troopers. While the bill would allow DPS to pay these-entry level officers up to an additional 15 percent above the maximum rates in schedule C, the language in the bill would be permissive.

The committee substitute would not reclassify any DPS positions within schedule C. It only would add an exception for DPS to pay these state troopers above the salary schedule maximum rate. State budget planners have already shown support for a similar proposals for other DPS positions, such as corporal. State troopers choose to put their lives on the line every day to protect public safety and should not be overlooked or forgotten in decisions to compensate them.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

The bill should include salary exceptions for officials from the other agencies in schedule C, such as game wardens and officers at the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, to create parity in pay with DPS troopers. These state employees also are involved in dangerous law enforcement activities, and the agencies that employ them need to recruit the best applicants possible.

NOTES:

According to the fiscal note, the bill would have no impact on general revenue. Money for possible DPS state trooper salary increases would come from State Highway Fund 06 at an estimated cost of \$7.5 million per fiscal year beginning in 2014.