

SUBJECT: Modifying certain fees for concealed handgun licenses

COMMITTEE: Homeland Security and Public Safety — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 7 ayes — Pickett, Fletcher, Dale, Kleinschmidt, Lavender, Sheets, Simmons
0 nays
2 absent — Cortez, Flynn

WITNESSES: For — Lon Craft, Texas Municipal Police Association
Against — None
On — RenEarl Bowie, Texas Department of Public Safety

BACKGROUND: In 2005, the 79th Legislature enacted HB 322 by Hupp, et al., adding Government Code, sec. 411.1951, which requires the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to add veterans honorably discharged by at least one year from military service to the list of those eligible to pay half of the normal licensing fee for concealed handgun licenses. A normal fee for concealed handgun licenses is \$140, and a fee for renewal of such licenses is \$70.

Government Code, sec. 411.1991 requires active peace officers who are employed full time to pay a fee of \$25 for concealed handgun licenses.

DIGEST: CSHB 485 would lower concealed handgun license fees for veterans who were honorably discharged by at least one year from military service from \$70 to \$25. These veterans also would pay half of the fee to obtain duplicate or modified licenses.

The bill also would allow reserve peace officers to pay \$25 for concealed handgun licenses.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2013.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

The state should show gratitude to honorably discharged veterans who have been out of the military for at least a year by giving them a greater discount on concealed handgun licenses than they already enjoy. This provision would help honor their service to their country and would bring them closer to the full waiver on concealed handgun license fees granted to more recent veterans and active-duty service members under current law.

CSHB 485 would extend to reserve and part-time peace officers the same fee discounts for concealed handgun permits given to active peace officers who are employed full time. When on the job, reserve peace officers take the same kinds of risks as active peace officers. Some of these reserve officers are volunteers and could benefit from a significant discount on concealed handgun licenses. Lowering concealed handgun license fees for reserve peace officers and veterans could prompt more people to purchase licenses and increase revenues in a way that eclipses any projected loss that could result from the additional discounts described in the bill.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

Reducing concealed handgun license fees would cost the state revenues it collects to pay for important services. The Legislative Budget Board stipulated that the bill would result in a negative impact of about \$807,000 through the biennium ending August 31, 2015.