

**SUBJECT:** Adding instruction on interaction with peace officers to certain curricula

**COMMITTEE:** Homeland Security and Public Safety — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 6 ayes — P. King, Nevárez, Hinojosa, J. Johnson, Metcalf, Wray  
0 nays  
3 absent — Burns, Holland, Schaefer

**SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, March 29 — 31-0

**WITNESSES:** *On House companion, HB 1864:*  
For — Chris Jones, Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas (CLEAT); Yannis Banks, Texas NAACP; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Kathryn Bedecarre, Martha Chang, Sukyi McMahan, Chas Moore, Lauren Oertel, and Lori Privitera, Austin Justice Coalition; TJ Patterson, City of Fort Worth; Bill Kelly, City of Houston Mayor's Office; Reginald Smith, Communities for Recovery; Fatima Mann, Counter Balance: ATX; Branden Johnson, East Texas Region of NAACP; Celina Moreno, MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund); Darwin Hamilton, Reentry Advocacy Project; Jimmy Rodriguez, San Antonio Police Officers Association; Dwight Harris, Texas AFT; Kathy Mitchell, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition; Joshua Houston, Texas Impact; Dana Blanton; Teresa Dozier; Michael Garcia; Elva Mendoza)  
  
Against — None  
  
On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Lauren Lacefield Lewis, Health and Human Services Commission; Raymond Pizarro, Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation; John Helenberg, Texas Commission on Law Enforcement)

**DIGEST:** SB 30 would require the inclusion of instruction on interaction with peace officers in the required curriculum for certain public school students and driver education courses. It also would require the inclusion of civilian

interaction training in the minimum curriculum for peace officers.

**Instruction on interaction with law enforcement.** The State Board of Education (SBOE) and the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) would be required to enter into a memorandum of understanding that established each agency's respective responsibilities in developing instruction on proper interaction with peace officers during traffic stops and other in-person encounters. The instruction would include information regarding:

- the role of law enforcement and the duties and responsibilities of police officers;
- a person's rights concerning interactions with police officers;
- proper behavior for civilians and police officers during interactions;
- laws on questioning and detention by police officers, including any law requiring a person to present proof of identity to a police officer, and the consequences for either party's failure to comply with those laws; and
- how and where to file a complaint against or a compliment on behalf of a police officer.

The board and commission would develop the instruction by September 1, 2018, and the SBOE would be required to adopt rules to include the instruction in one or more courses of the required curriculum for students in grade levels 9 through 12, beginning with the 2018-19 school year. A school district or charter school could tailor the instruction as appropriate for its community, and in doing so would be required to solicit input from local law enforcement agencies, driver training schools, and the community.

**Civilian interaction training program.** The commission and board also would enter into a memorandum of understanding to develop a training program for law enforcement officers on proper interaction with civilians during traffic stops and other in-person encounters. The program would include the same content as required for the instruction on interaction with

law enforcement.

The board and commission would develop the training program by September 1, 2018. As part of the minimum curriculum, a peace officer would have to complete the civilian interaction training program within two years after the officer was licensed, unless the officer completed the program as part of the officer's basic training course. A peace officer or reserve law enforcement officer who held a license issued on or before January 1, 2018, would have to complete the program by January 1, 2020.

**Driver education courses.** By September 1, 2018, the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation (TCLR) would have to adopt rules to require the inclusion of information relating to law enforcement procedures for traffic stops in the curriculum of each driver education course and driving safety course. The curriculum would include a demonstration of the proper actions to be taken during a traffic stop in addition to the information required in the instruction and training programs developed by TCOLE and SBOE under the bill.

**Implementation.** TCOLE and SBOE could consult with any interested party to develop the instruction and training program and would have to provide a reasonable period for public comment before finalizing any program. TCLR could consult with any interested party to develop the curriculum for driver education courses.

**Effective date.** The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

SB 30 would help address growing tensions between law enforcement and civilians through a balanced approach involving education for both law enforcement and the community. Some have suggested that strengthening the education and training of citizens and police officers in Texas on traffic stop procedures could serve to reduce the number of stops that result in arguments, injuries, or even death.

Requiring high school instruction on how best to interact with police officers during traffic stops and other situations would help restore a

general sentiment among young people that police officers are peacekeepers. Requiring similar information to be given during police academy training would help ensure that both sides of an encounter had a better understanding of their duties and expectations during interactions.

The bill would not require the creation of an additional high school course. Instead, it would allow the incorporation of the instruction into an existing course. Schools would have the flexibility to determine which course was most appropriate for the inclusion of this instruction and how the program would be presented to their student population and community. This flexibility would ensure that the addition of an instructional requirement did not detract from the core curriculum and would not result in an unfunded mandate.

The bill is not meant to resolve all the differences between law enforcement and civilians, but rather to be a first step in helping the two sides better understand each other to reduce the number of high-tension encounters between police and citizens.

OPPONENTS  
SAY:

While SB 30 would address real societal issues relating to police-civilian interaction, the onus of solving the problem should not fall on the state government, especially not the already overburdened public school system. Teaching young people how to properly interact with authorities should be the responsibility of parents or caregivers. Further, such instruction should not be added as a permanent part of the Texas curriculum, as it would leave less time available in the school day to devote to core studies.

NOTES:

A companion bill, HB 1864 by S. Thompson, was placed on the General State Calendar for May 9.