

SUBJECT: Allowing Lubbock County Hospital District to commission peace officers

COMMITTEE: County Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — Coleman, Bohac, Anderson, Biedermann, Cole, Dominguez, Huberty, Rosenthal, Stickland

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Jim Johnson, Lubbock County Hospital District; Maureen Milligan, Teaching Hospitals of Texas; Jennifer Banda, Texas Hospital Association)

Against — None

DIGEST: HB 1378 would allow the board of hospital managers of Lubbock County Hospital District to employ and commission peace officers for the district.

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, 2019.

SUPPORTERS SAY: HB 1378 would ensure the protection of hospital patients, visitors, and staff in Lubbock County.

Lubbock County Hospital District faces about 60 security-related disturbances a month. Security guards can handle many of these situations but do not have the power to detain or arrest. Lubbock County Hospital District needs its own dedicated peace officers who can perform these functions. It has hired off-duty Lubbock police officers in the past, but these officers' first duty is to the city, and they can be called away during precisely those situations in which the hospital might need them the most.

Lubbock should be empowered to take charge of its own security situation by becoming the sixth county hospital district in the state to commission its own peace officers. HB 1378 would allow the district to take the steps

necessary to secure the safety of the hospital community.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

No concerns identified.