

- `SUBJECT:** Changing definition of first responder to include certain military forces
- COMMITTEE:** Public Health — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 10 ayes — S. Thompson, Allison, Coleman, Frank, Guerra, Lucio, Ortega, Price, Sheffield, Zedler
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Wray
- WITNESSES:** For — None
- Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jason Romero, Indivisible Texas; Elisa Saslavsky; Arthur Simon)
- On — Robert Bodisch, Texas State Guard
- BACKGROUND:** Health and Safety Code sec. 161.0001 defines "first responder" as any federal, state, local, or private personnel who may respond to a disaster, including a member of the Texas State Guard.
- Sec. 161.00707 requires the Department of State Health Services to develop a program for informing first responders about the department's immunization registry and educating first responders about the benefits of being included in the registry, including ensuring first responders receive necessary immunizations to prevent the spread of communicable diseases to which they may be exposed during emergency situations and preventing duplication of vaccinations.
- Government Code sec. 437.001 defines "Texas military forces" as the Texas National Guard, the Texas State Guard, and any other military force organized under state law.
- DIGEST:** HB 1579 would amend the definition of first responder in the Health and Safety Code to include a member of the Texas military forces.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.

SUPPORTERS
SAY: By defining members of Texas' military forces as first responders, HB 1579 would allow them to access their immunization records and ensure their vaccinations were accurate and up to date. Members of state military forces put their lives at risk when they are deployed during state emergencies, and ensuring they receive necessary immunizations would help prevent the spread of communicable diseases and protect the health and safety of other first responders.

OPPONENTS
SAY: No concerns identified.