

SUBJECT: Requiring training for county jailers interacting with pregnant women

COMMITTEE: County Affairs — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 8 ayes — Bohac, Anderson, Biedermann, Cole, Dominguez, Huberty,
Rosenthal, Stickland

0 nays

1 absent — Coleman

WITNESSES: For — Chris Jones, Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas;
(*Registered, but did not testify*: Mignon McGarry, American College of
Obstetricians and Gynecologists Texas District; Mandy Blott, Austin
Justice Coalition; Traci Berry, Goodwill Central Texas; Kathleen
Mitchell, Just Liberty; Cindy Klempner, National Alliance on Mental
Illness-Austin; Alissa Sughrue, National Alliance on Mental Illness-
Texas; Kari James, Tarrant County Law Enforcement Association; Josette
Saxton, Texans Care for Children; Lori Henning, Texas Association of
Goodwills; Lance Lowry, Texas Association of Taxpayers-Correctional
Institute; Michael Barba, Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops; Cheri
Siegelin, Texas Correctional Employees-Huntsville; Lindsey Linder,
Texas Criminal Justice Coalition; Joey Gidseg, Texas Democrats with
Disabilities; Nikiya Natale, Texas Equal Access Fund, Lilith Fund for
Reproductive Equity; Diana Claitor, Kevin Garrett, and Krishnaveni
Gundu, Texas Jail Project; Michelle Romero, Texas Medical Association;
Kaycie Alexander, Texas Public Policy Foundation; Nataly Saucedo,
United Ways of Texas)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: James Skinner, Sheriffs'
Association of Texas)

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Kenny Merchant, Texas
Commission on Law Enforcement; John Woodley, Advocate for
Disability Access)

DIGEST: CSHB 2701 would require the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) to develop a training program for county jailers that would consist of education and training concerning interacting with pregnant women confined in a county jail. The program would have to be based on obstetrical and gynecological best practices and include general information on:

- pregnancy, labor, delivery, and recovery;
- identifying when a woman is in labor;
- appropriate prenatal and postnatal care and first aid techniques specific to pregnant women; and
- factors that increase the risk of a miscarriage.

The bill would add this training to the preparatory training program an individual would have to complete in order to be appointed as a county jailer. It also would require TCOLE to require any county that appointed or employed a county jailer to provide each jailer with the training program at least once every 48 months. The training would have to be provided by a medical professional.

TCOLE would be required to develop the training program and adopt rules necessary to incorporate the program into the preparatory training program for county jailers as soon as possible after the implementation of the bill. County jailers would have to complete this program as condition of employment only if they were hired on or after January 1, 2020.

The bill would take effect on September 1, 2019.

SUPPORTERS SAY: CSHB 2701 would ensure that pregnant women in county jails received the specific care and attention that they needed. Requiring county jailers to receive specific training about interacting with pregnant women confined in jails would help ensure better health and safety outcomes for both mothers and their children.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

CSHB 2701 would require additional training for county jailers without providing additional funding, which could burden county jails. Many county jails are struggling with a staffing shortage, and the resulting overtime costs money and can lead to retention issues. Requiring additional, unfunded training would only exacerbate these existing issues.