

- SUBJECT:** Developing basic training program for use of firearms by county jailers
- COMMITTEE:** Homeland Security and Public Safety — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Nevárez, Paul, Burns, Calanni, Clardy, Goodwin, Israel, Lang, Tinderholt
0 nays
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, April 29 — 30-1 (Hughes)
- WITNESSES:** *On House Companion bill, HB 3503:*
For — Chris Barnes, Sheriffs' Association of Texas; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Murray Agnew and Micah Harmon, Sheriffs' Association of Texas; Justin Berry, Austin Police Association; Chris Jones, Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas; Jimmy Rodriguez, San Antonio Police Officers Association)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Jo DePrang, Children's Defense Fund - Texas; Lynette Lucas)

On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Michael Antu and Kenny Merchant, Texas Commission on Law Enforcement)
- BACKGROUND:** Some have called for the creation of a statutory requirement for county jailers who carry a firearm for official duties to receive firearms training to demonstrate weapons proficiency, codifying a practice of almost all sheriffs' offices.
- DIGEST:** SB 1879 would require the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) to develop a basic training program for the use of firearms by county jailers that would have to provide instruction in:
- legal limitations on the use of firearms and on the powers and authority of jailers;
 - range firing and procedure;

- firearms safety and maintenance; and
- other topics determined by TCOLE.

TCOLE would have to administer the program and issue a certificate of firearms proficiency to each county jailer who successfully completed it. A county jailer who was issued a certificate and who maintained weapons proficiency in accordance with law could carry a firearm while performing duties, including transporting persons confined in the county jail, and while traveling to or from the jailer's place of assignment.

An agency that employed one or more county jailers who had been issued a certificate of firearms proficiency would have to designate a firearms proficiency officer and require that jailers demonstrate proficiency to the officer at least annually. The agency would have to maintain records of jailers' weapons proficiency.

A county jailer's failure to demonstrate weapons proficiency would not affect the county jailer's license issued by TCOLE.

This 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.