

- SUBJECT:** Establishing a grant program for law enforcement agencies
- COMMITTEE:** Homeland Security and Public Safety — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — White, Bowers, Goodwin, Harless, Hefner, Morales, Patterson, Schaefer, Tinderholt
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — Gene Ellis, Texas Police Chiefs Association; Derek Cohen, Texas Public Policy Foundation; Troye Dunlap; Scott Rubin; Steve Stanford; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Guadalupe Cuellar, City of El Paso; TJ Patterson, City of Fort Worth; Frederick Frazier, Dallas Police Association, State FOP; AJ Louderback, Sheriffs Association of Texas; Louis Wichers, Texas Gun Sense; and six individuals)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Cullen Grissom, Texas Commission on Law Enforcement)
- BACKGROUND:** Interested parties have noted that participation by law enforcement in accreditation programs benefits law enforcement agencies, municipalities, and the public. It has been suggested that additional incentives and assistance could be provided to law enforcement agencies for participation in such programs.
- DIGEST:** HB 323 would require the Criminal Justice Division in the Office of the Governor to establish and administer a grant program to provide financial assistance to a law enforcement agency in Texas for the purposes of:
- obtaining or maintaining recognition through the Texas Police Chiefs Association Law Enforcement Best Practices Recognition Program;
 - becoming accredited or maintaining accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc.;

or

- becoming accredited or maintaining accreditation by an association or organization designated by the division.

The amount of a grant under the program could not exceed \$50,000, and the division would have to establish certain criteria and procedures relating to grant applications and monitoring the use of grants awarded. The division would be authorized to use any revenue available for the grant program.

By December 1 of each year, the division would have to submit a report to the Legislative Budget Board providing the name of each law enforcement agency that applied for a grant and the amount of money distributed to each agency that received a grant during the preceding state fiscal year.

The division, with the assistance of the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE), would have to periodically review associations and organizations that established standards of practice for law enforcement agencies and that offered accreditation to agencies that met those standards. On a determination by the division that the accreditation of law enforcement agencies by an association or organization would benefit public safety, TCOLE could designate an association or organization as an accrediting agency for purposes of the grant program.

This bill would take immediate effect if it finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2021.

NOTES:

The Legislative Budget Board estimates that the bill would have a negative impact of about \$273.3 million through fiscal 2022-23, assuming that all law enforcement agencies pursued a grant under the program established by the bill and received the maximum amount. The cost would be dependent on the level of funding provided by the Legislature for the bill's purpose. A contingency rider for \$50 million was included for consideration in Art. 11 of SB 1 by Nelson (Bonnen), to provide funding for HB 323.

