

**SUBJECT:** Requiring police training on interacting with persons with dementias

**COMMITTEE:** Homeland Security and Public Safety — committee substitute recommended

**VOTE:** 9 ayes — White, Bowers, Goodwin, Harless, Hefner, E. Morales, Patterson, Schaefer, Tinderholt

0 nays

**WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Aaron Gregg, Alzheimer’s Association; TJ Patterson, City of Fort Worth; Kathy Mitchell, Just Liberty; Rick Briscoe, Open Carry Texas; Louis Wichers, Texas Gun Sense; Henry Bohnert; Bradley Hodges; Michelle Mostert; Thomas Parkinson)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Brian Hawthorne, Sheriffs Association of Texas; Cullen Grissom, Texas Commission on Law Enforcement)

**BACKGROUND:** Occupations Code sec. 1701.253 requires the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement to establish minimum curriculum requirements for schools that train peace officers and others licensed by the commission. As part of the minimum curriculum, sec. 1701.253(j) requires an officer to complete a 40-hour statewide education and training program on de-escalation and crisis intervention techniques to facilitate interaction with persons with mental impairments.

Interested parties have called for improving interactions between law enforcement and persons with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Persons with dementia have unique needs when it comes to communicating with others, and officers may not recognize the symptoms and techniques needed to effectively work with this population without proper training, which could lead to confusion and potentially hostile

situations.

**DIGEST:**

CSHB 4141 would require the statewide education and training program for peace officers on de-escalation and crisis intervention techniques for interaction with persons with mental impairments required under current law to include instruction on interacting with persons with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. The instruction would have to include techniques for recognizing symptoms, communicating effectively, employing alternatives to physical restraints, and identifying signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement would have to revise the education and training program as necessary to implement the bill by April 1, 2022.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021, and would apply only to a person who submitted an application for a peace officer license on or after April 1, 2022.