SUBJECT: Establishing a border operations training program for certain officers

COMMITTEE: Homeland Security & Public Safety — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 6 ayes — Guillen, Jarvis Johnson, Bowers, Dorazio, Harless, Holland

                0 nays

                3 absent — Canales, Goodwin, Troxclair

WITNESSES: For — Charles Maley, South Texans' Property Rights Association
                (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jennifer Szimanski, Combined Law
                Enforcement Associations of Texas; Carlos Ortiz, San Antonio Police
                Officer's Association; Jose Escribano, Travis County Constable Pct3)

                Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Lauren Johnson, ACLU of
                Texas; Guadalupe Cuellar, City of El Paso; Jaime Puente, Every Texan;
                Fatima Menendez, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational
                Fund; Roberto Lopez, Texas Civil Rights Project; Jaime Puente, TRUST
                Coalition)

                On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Cullen Grissom, Texas Commission
                on Law Enforcement)

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that facilitating collaboration between state, local,
                and federal law enforcement in regards to border security could reduce
                strain on law enforcement agencies operating along the Texas-Mexico
                border.

DIGEST: HB 1675 would require the Department of Public Safety (DPS), in
                coordination with local law enforcement agencies, to establish and
                administer a border operations training program for peace officers
                employed by local law enforcement agencies. The program would prepare
                officers to collaborate and cooperate with and assist any law enforcement
                agency in the interdiction, investigation, and prosecution of criminal
                activity in the Texas-Mexico border region. Officers also would be

prepared to collaborate and cooperate with and assist district attorneys, county attorneys, the border prosecution unit, and other prosecutors in the investigation and prosecution of allegations of criminal activity in the Texas-Mexico border region.

The training program would be required to include information on certain criminal activity occurring along the Texas-Mexico border and on methods for identifying northbound, southbound, and intrastate criminal activity associated with drug trafficking, human trafficking, and other organized criminal activity. The training program also would include best practices for investigating and prosecuting such criminal activity and securing the Texas-Mexico border, along with an overview of DPS border operations, including any collaboration with U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

DPS would be required to identify opportunities for a peace officer to assist with duties related to border operations. DPS could authorize the officer to assist in carrying out such duties. Such an officer would not be entitled to compensation from DPS for the assistance provided.

DPS could partner with federal agencies in administering the training program and facilitating any assistance provided by a peace officer.

The bill would authorize the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) to recognize or, with consent from DPS, administer or assist in administering the border operations training program as a continuing education program for officers. TCOLE also would be authorized to credit an officer who successfully completed the program with the appropriate number of continuing education hours.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023.