

SUBJECT: Authorizing the establishment of the state school safety fund

COMMITTEE: Youth Health & Safety, Select — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 8 ayes — S. Thompson, Hull, Allison, Capriglione, Dutton, A. Johnson, Landgraf, Lozano

0 nays

1 absent — T. King

WITNESSES: For — Adrian Moore, Council on At-Risk Youth; Christy Rome, Texas School Coalition (*Registered, but did not testify*: Julia Grizzard, Bexar County Education Coalition; Lupe Cuellar, City of El Paso; Charles Luke, Coalition for Education Funding; Charles Ramirez, EMS ISD; Colby Nichols, Leander ISD; Will Holleman, Raise Your Hand Texas; Brian Hawthorne, Sheriffs' Association of Texas; David Hinds, Sparkcognition; Grover Campbell, TASB; Colby Nichols, Texas Association of Community Schools; Amy Beneski, Texas Association of School Administrators; Jenny Andrews, Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops; Andrea Chevalier, Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education; Brandon Garcia, Texas Public Charter Schools Association; Dee Carney, Texas School Alliance; Louis Wichers)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Paige Duggins-Clay, Intercultural Development Research Association; Alejandro Pena, Texas American Federation of Teachers; Carrie Griffith, Texas State Teachers Association; Sarah Berel-Harrop; Carly Blaine; Kathryn Kizer; Lindsey Sikes; Tal Wildman)

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Eric Marin, TEA; John Scott, James Terry, Texas Education Agency; John McGeady, Texas Permanent School Fund Corporation)

DIGEST: CSHJR 170 would amend the Texas Constitution to establish the state school safety fund as a special fund in the state treasury outside the

general revenue fund. Money in the fund would be administered by the Texas Permanent School Fund Corporation or that corporation's successor in function. The resolution would allow the fund to be used only to support projects to enhance the safety of Texas public schools, including projects to ensure schools met school safety standards established by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) or the agency's successor in function. The resolution would allow separate accounts to be established in the fund as necessary or convenient.

The resolution would allow the Legislature to authorize the Texas Permanent School Fund Corporation or its successor to provide money from the fund to TEA for purposes of providing financial assistance, including by direct grant to an independent school district or charter school.

The state school safety fund would consist of:

- money appropriated to the fund;
- money transferred or deposited to the credit of the fund by general law, including money transferred or deposited at the discretion of the Texas Permanent School Fund or TEA;
- revenue from any source that the Legislature by statute dedicated for deposit to the fund;
- investment earnings and interest earned on amounts credited to the fund;
- money appropriated by the Legislature to fund public schools that was determined by the commissioner of education to exceed the amount required for the support and maintenance of public schools; and
- money transferred to the fund from another fund or account to which money from the fund was transferred.

CSHJR 170 would require the Legislature to provide for the manner in which money in the fund could be used. The Legislature could provide for costs of investments and administration of the fund to be paid from the fund.

The resolution would consider a deposit of money from the economic stabilization fund for the state school safety fund as an appropriation of state tax revenues dedicated by the constitution.

The Legislature could provide for the implementation and effectuate the design and objects of the resolution. The Legislature could delegate duties, responsibilities, functions, and authority to the Texas Permanent School Fund Corporation or TEA for those purposes.

The ballot proposal would be presented to voters at an election on November 7, 2023, and would read: "The constitutional amendment creating the state school safety fund to provide financial support for projects that enhance the safety of public schools in this state."

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHJR 170 would help to address growing concerns about school safety and security across the state by creating the state school safety fund. The resolution would give Texas voters the opportunity to choose to create the fund, which would help pay for future school safety projects alongside its enabling legislation CSHB 13. The resolution would significantly increase the amount of money available to schools for school safety and security initiatives by allowing the school safety fund to be comprised of multiple funding sources.

**CRITICS
SAY:**

CSHJR 170 may not adequately help fund or protect schools in the state. Increased funding for Texas schools should be accomplished through increases in the basic allotment. The school safety funds allocated by the resolution would primarily fund school hardening and security measures that may not necessarily make schools safer.

NOTES:

CSHB 13, the enabling legislation for CSHJR 170, is on the Major State calendar for second reading consideration today.

According to the Legislative Budget Board, the cost to the state for publication of the resolution would be \$204,406.