

SUBJECT: Revising SASTF and requiring certain peace officer training

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

VOTE: 6 ayes — Guillen, J. Johnson, Bowers, Goodwin, Harless, Holland
1 nay — Dorazio
1 absent — Canales
1 present not voting — Troxclair

SENATE VOTE: On final passage (May 3) — 30-1

WITNESSES: None (*considered in a formal meeting on May 11*)

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that peace officer training should be updated to include trauma-informed approaches to childhood sexual abuse and adult sexual assault.

DIGEST: SB 1402 would revise provisions related to the Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force (SASTF) and establish training requirements for licensed peace officers on child sexual abuse and adult sexual assault, including best practices and trauma-informed response techniques.

Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force. The bill would add to SASTF a requirement that the task force be composed of a representative from the Department of Family Protective Services (DFPS) that has duties related to sexual offenses or providing services to survivors, an adult survivor of child sexual abuse or the parent or guardian of a survivor of child sexual abuse, and a survivor of adult sexual assault. The bill would remove the requirement that the task force include the president of the Texas Society of Pathologists or the president's designee. The bill would establish that current statute on state agency advisory committees would not apply to the composition or duration of the task force or the designation of the task

force's presiding officer.

A task force member who was not employed by a state agency, or an individual who was invited by the governor to participate would be entitled to a per diem in the amount provided by the General Appropriations Act for each day the member performed duties or attended meetings related to the task force. Such members would be entitled to reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred while performing duties as a member or participant of the task force.

Training program. SB 1402 would require the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) to consult with the SASTF to establish a basic education and training program on child sexual abuse and adult sexual assault, including best practices and trauma-informed response techniques to effectively recognize, investigate, and document such cases. The training program would have to consist of at least eight hours of instruction.

TCOLE would have to require officers, as part of minimum curriculum requirements in peace officer training schools, to complete the above training program no later than the last day of the first full continuing education training period after the date the officer was licensed unless the officer had completed the program as part of the basic training course. Officers who had not completed the training as part of the officer's school curriculum or a training program that was equivalent as determined by the commission would be required to complete the training program.

TCOLE would be required to establish the training program no later than January 1, 2024. The minimum curriculum requirements would apply only to an officer who first began to satisfy those requirements on or after January 1, 2024.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023.