

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 839
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State Affairs
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As Filed

DIGEST

Currently, there are no U.S. standards regulating the safety aspects of window-bar releasing devices. Approximately 16 innocent people die behind bars each year. Burglar bars installed on ground floors to keep out criminals and protect the inhabitants can become hazards for fire victims seeking to escape their burning homes, and the bars also become impediments for firefighters' rescue attempts. S.B. 839 restricts the use of security bars on bedroom windows and doors, and grants rulemaking authority to the fire marshal.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 839 restricts the use of security bars on bedroom windows and doors, and grants rulemaking authority to the fire marshal.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is granted to the state fire marshal in SECTION 1 (Sections 756.083 and 756.084(b), Health and Safety Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 756, Health and Safety Code, by adding Subchapter F, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER F. SECURITY BARS.

Sec. 756.081. DEFINITIONS. Defines "bedroom," "board," "department," "residential dwelling," and "security bars."

Sec. 756.082. SECURITY BARS ON RESIDENTIAL DWELLING. Prohibits installation of security bars on a bedroom window or door, and makes exceptions to the prohibition.

Sec. 756.083. LABELING REQUIREMENT. Prohibits the sale of security bars in Texas without required labeling. Authorizes the state fire marshal (marshal) to adopt labeling rules, and sets forth labeling requirements.

Sec. 756.084. TESTING. Requires the marshal to test a security bar interior release mechanism prior to its qualification for use. Requires the marshal to adopt rules to implement this section.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 1999.
Requires the state fire marshal to adopt certain rules by December 15, 1999.

SECTION 3. Makes application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 4. Emergency clause.