

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
78R14344 KEG-F

C.S.H.B. 1937
By: Gallego (Gallegos)
Administration
5/13/2003
Committee Report (Substituted)

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Since September 11, 2001, the focus of public attention has been on the sacrifices called for and made by first responders who serve our state and its citizens. The State of Texas does not currently have a process to officially honor these men and women who sustain serious or fatal injuries in the line of duty. C.S.H.B. 1937 creates the Star of Texas Awards to be awarded to an individual seriously injured in the line of duty or the next of kin to those peace officers, fire fighters, or emergency medical first responders who sustain a fatal injury in the line of duty.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 662, Government Code, by adding Section 662.050, as follows:

Sec. 662.050. TEXAS FIRST RESPONDERS DAY. (a) Provides that September 11 is Texas First Responders Day in honor of the bravery, courage, and determination of Texas men and women who assist others in emergencies.

(b) Requires Texas First Responders Day to be regularly observed by appropriate ceremonies in the public schools and other places to honor Texas first responders. Authorizes each governmental agency to determine the appropriate ceremonies by which Texas observes Texas First Responders Day.

SECTION 2. Amends Subtitle A, Title 11, Government Code, by adding Chapter 3105, as follows:

Chapter 3105. STAR OF TEXAS AWARDS

Sec. 3105.001. DEFINITIONS. Defines “emergency medical first responder,” “firefighter,” and “peace officer.”

Sec. 3105.002. PEACE OFFICERS’ STAR OF TEXAS AWARD (a) Authorizes the Peace Officers’ Star of Texas Award to be awarded to a peace officer who is seriously injured in the line of duty or the surviving next of kin of a peace officer who is killed or sustains a fatal injury in the line of duty.

(b) Requires the Peace Officers’ Star of Texas Award Advisory Committee to advise the governor on the issuance, design, and presentation of the Peace Officers’ Star of Texas Award.

(c) Provides that the committee consists of three current or retired peace officers appointed by the governor who have each served with distinction during a lengthy career as a peace officer.

Sec. 3105.003. FIREFIGHTERS’ STAR OF TEXAS AWARD. (a) Authorizes the

Firefighters' Star of Texas Award to be awarded to a firefighter who is seriously injured in the line of duty or the surviving next of kin of a firefighter who is killed or sustains a fatal injury in the line of duty.

(b) Requires the Firefighters' Star of Texas Award Advisory Committee to advise the governor on the issuance, design, and presentation of the Firefighters' Star of Texas Award.

(c) Provides that the committee consists of three current or retired firefighters appointed by the governor who have each served with distinction during a lengthy career as a firefighter.

Sec. 3105.004. EMERGENCY MEDICAL FIRST RESPONDERS' STAR OF TEXAS AWARD. (a) Authorizes the Emergency Medical First Responders' Star of Texas Award to be awarded to an emergency medical first responder who is seriously injured in the line of duty or the surviving next of kin of an emergency medical first responder who is killed or sustains a fatal injury in the line of duty.

(b) Requires the Emergency Medical First Responders' Star of Texas Award Advisory Committee to advise the governor on the issuance, design, and presentation of the Emergency Medical First Responders' Star of Texas Award.

(c) Provides that the committee consists of three current or retired emergency medical first responders appointed by the governor who have each served with distinction during a lengthy career as an emergency medical first responder.

Sec. 3105.005. GENERAL MATTERS AFFECTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE. (a) Provides that each member of an advisory committee created under this chapter serves at the will of the governor.

(b) Requires the governor to designate the presiding officer of each advisory committee.

(c) Requires each advisory committee to meet once annually at the call of the governor or the presiding officer of the committee, not less than three weeks before September 11, and at a location deemed appropriate by the governor or the governor's representative.

(d) Prohibits a member of an advisory committee from receiving compensation for service on the committee or reimbursement for travel expenses incurred while conducting the business of the committee.

(e) Provides that an advisory committee is not subject to Chapter 2110.

Sec. 3105.006. PRESENTATION; AWARD. (a) Requires the governor or the governor's representative to present in the name of the state a star of Texas award under this chapter to the appropriate recipient or surviving next of kin during a public ceremony held on, or as near as practicable to, September 11 of each year.

(b) Requires the award, at a minimum, to consist of a medal, a certificate, and a ribbon suitable for wearing on a uniform.

Sec. 3105.007. RECOMMENDATION FOR AWARD. Authorizes any person who has personal knowledge that a peace officer, firefighter, or emergency medical first responder has been killed or seriously injured in the line of duty to submit that information in writing to a committee under this chapter.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2003.