

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 788
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Natural Resources & Economic Development
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In 1968, Congress established "9-1-1" as a universal emergency number, although it took many years for it to be implemented nationwide. Generations of children have been taught to call 9-1-1 in emergency situations. Unfortunately, some multi-line telephone systems in hotels and other establishments are programmed to require a person to first dial "9" to get an outside line.

On December 1, 2013, Kari Hunt agreed to bring her children to meet her estranged husband in a Marshall, Texas, motel room, but the meeting turned violent. Hunt's oldest daughter, just 9 years old at the time, did what she had been taught to do. She called 9-1-1, but the call never went through to the authorities because there was a requirement to dial "9" for an outside line. Kari Hunt died of her injuries before help arrived.

S.B. 788, Kari's Law, would require operators of multi-line telephone systems to configure the system to allow a person initiating a 9-1-1 call on the system to access 9-1-1 service by dialing the digits 9-1-1 without an additional, code, digit, prefix, postfix, or trunk-access code.

As proposed, S.B. 788 amends current law relating to requiring direct access to 9-1-1 service from certain telephone systems and Internet Protocol enabled services.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Commission on State Emergency Communications in SECTION 2 (Section 771A.001, Health and Safety Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Requires that this Act be known as Kari's Law.

SECTION 2. Amends Subtitle B, Title 9, Health and Safety Code, by adding Chapter 771A, as follows:

CHAPTER 771A. ACCESS TO EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES IN GENERAL

Sec.771A.001. DIRECT ACCESS TO 9-1-1 SERVICE REQUIRED. (a) Defines "business service user," "commission," "emergency communication district," "Internet Protocol enabled service," and "telephone system."

(b) Provides that this section applies to the extent the section is not inconsistent with or preempted by federal law.

(c) Requires a business service user that provides residential or business facilities, owns or leases a telephone system or an equivalent system that uses Internet Protocol enabled service, and provides outbound dialing capacity or access to configure the system to allow a person initiating a 9-1-1 call on the system to access 9-1-1 service by dialing the digits 9-1-1 without an additional code, digit, prefix, postfix, or trunk-access code, notwithstanding any other law.

(d) Requires the Commission on State Emergency Communications (CSEC) to adopt rules that are governed by a regional plan, and authorizes an emergency communication district to adopt those rules in accordance with Section 771.062 (Local Adoption of State Rule).

(e) Requires CSEC, an emergency communication district, or a home-rule municipality that independently operates a 9-1-1 system to provide assistance to a business service user that is within the applicable governmental entity's jurisdiction in complying with this section, on the request of the business service user.

Sec. 771A.002. 9-1-1 ADDRESS INFORMATION FOR CERTAIN BUSINESS SERVICE USERS. Requires a business service user described by Section 771A.001(c) to furnish 9-1-1 address information for each line of the multiline telephone system to the applicable governmental entity that operates a 9-1-1 system. Requires that the 9-1-1 address information indicate the room number or similar designation of a portion of the structure or building for each line of the multiline telephone system.

SECTION 3. Requires a business service user, as defined by Section 771A.001(a), Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act, to comply with Sections 771A.001 and 771A.002, Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act, not later than September 1, 2016.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2105.