

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1344
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Current Texas law only allows state employees who are volunteer firefighters or emergency medical services volunteers to take paid leave when they are participating in these volunteer activities. This leaves out a large group of volunteers who are part of search and rescue teams across the state.

This bill amends the Government Code to add search and rescue volunteers to the list of state employees that are able to take paid leave to partake in training and volunteer operations.

This includes state employees employed in the executive or judicial branch of state government who without remuneration, except reimbursement for expenses, provide services for or on behalf of an organization that conducts search and rescue activities to a leave of absence without a deduction in salary, capped at five working days in a fiscal year, to attend search and rescue training conducted by an applicable state agency or institution of higher education. The bill authorizes an applicable state agency or institution of higher education to grant such an employee leave without a deduction in salary for the purpose of allowing the employee to respond to search and rescue situations if the agency or institution has an established policy for granting that leave.

As proposed, S.B. 1344 amends current law relating to paid leave for a state employee who is a search and rescue volunteer.

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 Section 661.905, Government Code, as follows:

Sec. 661.905. New heading: VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS, EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES VOLUNTEERS, AND SEARCH AND RESCUE VOLUNTEERS. (a) Defines "emergency medical services volunteer" and "search and rescue volunteer" for purposes of this section. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

(b) Entitles a state employee who is a search and rescue volunteer, among other volunteer positions, to a leave of absence without a deduction in salary to attend training conducted by a state agency or institution of higher education. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

(c) Makes conforming changes.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2019.