

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.H.B. 2073
By: Burrows et al. (Springer)
Local Government
5/19/2021
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The recent pandemic affected communities across Texas. As Texans struggled to make the best of a very tough situation, our first responders remained vigilant and answered the calls of the public they protect and serve. Through riots, storms, and their normal duties they are expected to perform, many were exposed to COVID-19.

In an effort to protect other first responders many local governments made the proper decision to order these first responders to quarantine.

Unfortunately, among those who were forced to quarantine because of exposure doing their duties, many were forced to use vacation or sick leave in order to cover the costs associated with the quarantining employee's absence. For many this seemed punitive and unfair.

The bill resolves this issue by requiring paid leave specifically for quarantine. The bill would ensure that no firefighter, peace officer, or EMT faces an unexpected financial burden in addition to the other physical and psychological stresses of continuing to perform their duties during an outbreak of disease.

(Original Author's/Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

C.S.H.B. 2073 amends current law relating to quarantine leave for fire fighters, peace officers, detention officers, and emergency medical technicians employed by, appointed by, or elected for a political subdivision.

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 the heading to Chapter 180, Local Government Code, to read as follows:

CHAPTER 180. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS AFFECTING OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 180, Local Government Code, by adding Section 180.008, as follows:

Sec. 180.008. PAID QUARANTINE LEAVE FOR FIRE FIGHTERS, PEACE OFFICERS, DETENTION OFFICERS, AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS. (a) Defines "detention officer," "emergency medical technician," "fire fighter," "health authority," and "peace officer."

(b) Requires the governing body of a political subdivision to develop and implement a paid quarantine leave policy for fire fighters, peace officers, detention officers, and emergency medical technicians who are employed by, appointed by, or elected for the political subdivision and ordered to quarantine or

isolate due to a possible or known exposure to a communicable disease while on duty.

(c) Requires that a paid quarantine leave policy:

(1) provide that a fire fighter, peace officer, detention officer, or emergency medical technician on paid quarantine leave receive:

(A) all employment benefits and compensation, including leave accrual, pension benefits, and health benefit plan benefits for the duration of the leave; and

(B) reimbursement for reasonable costs related to the quarantine, including lodging, medical, and transportation; and

(2) require that the leave be ordered by the person's supervisor or the political subdivision's health authority.

(d) Prohibits a political subdivision from reducing a fire fighter's, peace officer's, detention officer's, or emergency medical technician's sick leave balance, vacation leave balance, holiday leave balance, or other paid leave balance in connection with paid quarantine leave taken in accordance with a policy adopted under this section.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2021.