

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
87R5541 SCL-F

S.B. 1401
By: Springer
Local Government
4/1/2021
As Filed

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, many of those who were forced to quarantine because of exposure doing their duties 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.

S.B. 1401 amends the Local Government Code by providing quarantine leave for certain first responders and by prohibiting a political subdivision from reducing a first responder's paid leave balance in connection with quarantine leave.

As proposed, S.B. 1401 amends current law relating to quarantine leave for fire fighters, peace 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. QUARANTINE LEAVE FOR FIRE FIGHTERS, PEACE OFFICERS, AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS. (a) Defines "emergency medical technician," "fire fighter," and "peace officer."

(b) Requires a political subdivision to place on paid quarantine leave a fire fighter, peace officer, or emergency medical technician employed by the political subdivision and ordered by a supervisor or a health authority to quarantine or isolate due to a possible or known exposure to a communicable disease while on duty.

(c) Requires a political subdivision to provide to a fire fighter, peace officer, or emergency medical technician on quarantine leave all employment benefits and compensation, including leave accrual, pension benefits, and health benefit plan

benefits, and to provide costs related to the quarantine, including lodging, medical, and transportation costs.

(d) Prohibits a political subdivision from reducing a fire fighter's, peace officer's, or emergency medical technician's sick leave balance, vacation leave balance, holiday leave balance, or other paid leave balance in connection with quarantine leave required by Subsection (b).

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