

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1051
By: Watson
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties raise concerns over the difficulty many individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing encounter in taking a required driver education course in American Sign Language. S.B. 1051 seeks to address these concerns by providing for the accommodation of a student in driver education who is deaf or hard of hearing.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation in SECTIONS 1 and 2 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 1051 amends the Education Code to require the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) to create a driver education course for minors and adults that presents the course curriculum in American Sign Language and make the course available on the TDLR website. The bill authorizes TDLR to collaborate with another state agency to create the course and requires the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation to establish by rule a fee for the course that is in addition to a fee charged for a certificate for the course. The bill requires the fee to be in an amount that is not more than an amount necessary to cover the cost of creating and administering the course and not more than the average cost of an online driver education course provided in Texas, as determined by the commission.

S.B. 1051 requires the commission by rule to require a driver education school providing a driver education course to make reasonable modifications and provide aids and services in the manner described by the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 when providing the classroom portion of the course that are necessary to ensure that a student who is deaf or hard of hearing may fully participate in the course and to provide to TDLR the school's plan for complying with the rules adopted under the bill's provisions as a condition of obtaining or renewing a driver education school or course provider license. The bill requires those rules to allow a driver education school to comply with the requirements by playing a video that presents the classroom portion of the driver education course in a manner that complies with the requirements.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2017.