

SUBJECT: Listing professional licenses on sex-offender registration forms

COMMITTEE: Public Safety — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 5 ayes — B. Turner, Berman, Driver, Gutierrez, Isett
0 nays
4 absent — Keel, Hupp, King, Villarreal

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 11 — 29-0, on Local and Uncontested Calendar

WITNESSES: None

BACKGROUND: Texas' sex-offender registration and notification law requires certain sex offenders to register with local law enforcement authorities and requires public notification of their whereabouts. The Department of Public Safety (DPS) must provide state correctional agencies, local law enforcement agencies, and courts with a form for the registrations.

DIGEST: SB 654 would add to the information required on DPS' sex-offender registration form. The form would have to require an indication of each license held or sought by the sex offender. This would include licenses, certificates, registrations, permits, and other authorizations required for a person to practice or engage in a business, occupation, or profession.

DPS would have to notify licensing authorities about a person required to register as a sex offender who held a license issued by the authority. The notice would have to be provided as the information became available through the offender's registration or verification of registration information.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2001. It would apply to the initial registration of a person who first registered on or after that date and to registration verifications that occurred on or after that date.

SUPPORTERS SAY: SB 654 would close a gap in current law under which registered sex offenders do not have to disclose what professional licenses they hold or

have sought. This can create a problem if an offender holds a license to work in a profession that is inappropriate for a sex offender. For example, some registered sex offenders hold teaching certificates.

The bill would solve this problem by requiring DPS to provide space on the registration form for offenders to indicate their licenses and by requiring DPS to notify licensing authorities of people who were required to register as sex offenders. The licensing authority could take action, if appropriate, and would have easier access to sex-offender registration information. The bill would apply only to licenses and other authorizations required for people to practice or engage in businesses, occupations or professions, not to driver's or hunting licenses.

DPS could work the requirements of SB 654 into its registration programs without difficulty, and the bill's fiscal note estimates no fiscal implication to the state.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

SB 654 could make it more difficult for sex offenders to rebuild their lives and to hold jobs. Licensing authorities might feel pressure to revoke licenses of all sex offenders, even if the circumstances did not warrant revocation.