

- SUBJECT:** Training peace officers on trauma-informed response techniques
- COMMITTEE:** Homeland Security and Public Safety — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — Nevárez, Paul, Burns, Calanni, Goodwin, Israel, Lang, Tinderholt
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Clardy
- WITNESSES:** For — Christina Green, Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas, Inc.; Chris Kaiser, Texas Association Against Sexual Assault; Abigail Brookshire (*Registered, but did not testify*: Nicholas Hudson, American Civil Liberties Union of Texas; Adam Cahn, Cahnman's Musings; Brie Franco, City of Austin; Chris Jones, Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas; Fatima Mann, Community Advocacy and Healing Project; Charles Reed, Dallas County Commissioners Court; Frederick Frazier, Dallas Police Association; Jessica Anderson, Houston Police Department; Christine Yanas, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc.; Marilyn Hartman and Eric Kunish, National Alliance of Mental Health Austin; Alissa Sughrue, National Alliance on Mental Illness Texas; Will Francis, National Association of Social Workers-Texas Chapter; Michael Barba, Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops; Allison Franklin, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition; Deneen Robinson, The Afiya Center; Deece Eckstein, Travis County Commissioners Court; and nine individuals)
- Against — None
- On — Michael Antu, Texas Commission on Law Enforcement
- BACKGROUND:** Occupations Code sec. 1701.253 requires the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) to establish the minimum curriculum for peace officer, county jailer, and telecommunicator training schools, including required courses and programs to provide training in the investigation and

documentation of cases that involve child abuse or neglect, family violence, and sexual assault.

Sec. 1701.352(b) requires an agency that appoints or employs peace officers to provide each officer with a TCOLE-approved continuing education program at least once every 48 months that consists of selected topics and, for certain officers, up to 20 hours of training that contains curricula incorporating certain objectives, such as the recognition and documentation of cases that involve child abuse or neglect, family violence, and sexual assault.

Some suggest that trauma-informed response techniques should be incorporated into required TCOLE training for law enforcement officers, who are often the first to encounter a survivor of sexual assault.

DIGEST:

CSHB 282 would require the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) curriculum requirements under Occupations Code sec. 1701.253 to include training in the use of best practices and trauma-informed response techniques to effectively recognize, investigate, and document cases of child abuse and neglect, family violence, and sexual assault. TCOLE would have to implement this change by January 1, 2020.

The continuing education program requirements under Occupations Code sec. 1701.352(b) also would have to include the use of best practices and trauma-informed response techniques in the recognition, investigation, and documentation of cases involving child abuse and neglect, family violence, and sexual assault.

TCOLE would be required to establish minimum requirements for the training, testing, and certification of special officers for responding to allegations of child abuse and neglect, family violence, and sexual assault.

TCOLE could certify a peace officer as a special officer if the person:

- completed an advanced training course on recognizing, investigating, and documenting cases involving child abuse and

neglect, family violence, and sexual assault using best practices and trauma-informed response techniques; and

- passed an exam testing the person's knowledge and recognition of signs of such crimes and the person's skill at investigating and documenting them.

CSHB 282 would allow TCOLE to issue a professional achievement proficiency certificate to a certified special officer who met these requirements.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.