

SUBJECT: Exempting certain firefighters and police officers from jury service

COMMITTEE: Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 8 ayes — Leach, Davis, Julie Johnson, Krause, Middleton, Moody, Schofield, Smith

0 nays

1 absent — Dutton

WITNESSES: For — Greg Shipley and Scott Leeton, Corpus Christi Police Officers Association; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jennifer Szimanski, CLEAT; James Parnell, Dallas Police Association; Dallas Reed, Texas Municipal Police Association; Frederick Frazier, Texas State FOP; Thomas Hollingsworth)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Calvin Tillman)

BACKGROUND: Government Code sec. 62.106(a) establishes grounds for certain exemptions from jury service. Some have suggested that time spent by firefighters and police officers in the jury selection process takes them away from protecting the community and that they should have an exemption from jury service on the basis of their occupation

DIGEST: HB 2585 would allow the following firefighters and police officers to be exempt from jury service:

- a firefighter, including a fire chief, who was a permanent paid employee of the fire department of a municipality or county or of a special district or authority that provides firefighting services; or
- a police officer, including a police chief, who was a permanent, paid member of the police department of a municipality or county.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021, and would apply only to a person summoned to appear for jury service who was required to appear

on or after that date.