

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 44
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Natural Resources & Economic Development
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Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Current law allows state employees who are certified disaster service volunteers for the American Red Cross to be granted leave without deduction in salary, vacation time, sick leave, or other employee benefits during a declared disaster. American Red Cross service volunteers, however, are only a fraction of the total who volunteer with the member organizations of the Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD). Texas has witnessed with the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, that the state's disaster response needs may vary depending on the nature, scale, and magnitude of the disaster. Accordingly, allowing state employees to assist with other organizations—service-based nonprofits, faith-based organizations, food banks, etc.—also would be impactful in emergencies.

S.B. 44 would authorize state employees who are volunteers with any Texas VOAD organization to be granted leave to serve during a disaster without any deductions in employee salary or benefits, provided the leave is authorized by the employee's supervisor. The bill would cap the amount of leave days granted for service in one fiscal year at ten (10).

S.B. 44 amends current law relating to leave for state employees who are volunteers of certain disaster relief organizations.

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 Subchapter Z, Chapter 661, Government Code, by adding Section 661.9075, as follows:

Sec. 661.9075. VOLUNTEERS OF TEXAS VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN DISASTER. (a) Authorizes a state employee who is a volunteer of an organization that is a member of the Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster to be granted leave to participate in disaster relief services without a deduction in salary or loss of vacation time, sick leave, earned overtime credit, or state compensatory time if:

- (1) the employee's supervisor authorizes the leave;
- (2) the services in which the employee participates are provided for a state of disaster declared by the governor under Chapter 418 (Emergency Management); and
- (3) the executive director of the employee's state agency approves the leave.

(b) Prohibits the leave granted to a state employee under Subsection (a) from exceeding 10 days each fiscal year.

SECTION 2. Repealer: Section 661.907 (Red Cross Disaster Service Volunteer), Government Code.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2021.
SRC-JJB S.B. 44 87(R)