

SUBJECT: Allowing all counties to offer certain services related to driver's licenses

COMMITTEE: Homeland Security and Public Safety — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 8 ayes — Phillips, Nevárez, Burns, Dale, Metcalf, Moody, M. White, Wray

0 nays

1 absent — Johnson

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 28 — 30-1 (Uresti)

WITNESSES: For — None

Against — None

On — Ron Coleman, Texas Department of Public Safety

BACKGROUND: SB 1729 by Nichols, enacted by the 83rd Legislature in 2013, authorized the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to establish a pilot program for the provision of renewal and duplicate driver's licenses, election identification certificates, and personal identification services in certain counties.

Under the pilot program, as provided by Transportation Code, sec. 521.008, DPS may enter into an agreement with a commissioners court to allow county employees to offer at a county office driver's license and personal identification services and to collect associated fees. County employees may provide services that include taking photos, administering vision tests, and updating driver's licenses or identification documents. DPS may enter into agreements only with counties that meet certain criteria specified in current law.

DIGEST: SB 1756 would expand the Department of Public Safety (DPS) program that authorizes the department to enter into agreements with counties to allow county employees to provide certain renewal and duplicate driver's

license and other identification certificate services. The bill would remove the program's designation as a "pilot" program.

DPS could establish a program to provide renewal and duplicate driver's license, election identification certificate, and personal identification certificate services in any county that entered into an agreement with the department to offer these services.

This bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2015.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

SB 1756 would expand a Department of Public Safety (DPS) pilot program that successfully increased efficiency and expedited the delivery of services within local DPS offices by allowing counties to provide certain services for driver's licenses and other identification renewal and duplication. Texas' population has grown significantly in recent years, increasing the demand on DPS driver's license offices for license renewal and duplication. Moreover, some rural counties do not have a DPS office or an office located nearby. This bill would expand the program to allow all counties to participate.

This bill is permissive and would not require DPS or a county commissioners court to enter into any agreement to provide these services. Counties that entered into an agreement would cover the cost of a facility, while DPS would provide only training and necessary equipment, which would minimize costs for the department. The fiscal note estimates the cost of participation for every county in Texas. The ability for DPS to offer services to counties is limited by its budget, and DPS would not enter into an agreement without sufficient funds.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

By allowing the implementation of this program across the state, SB 1756 could be expensive for DPS. According to the fiscal note, the program could cost up to \$5.3 million in fiscal 2016 and about \$2.3 million in each following year.

NOTES:

According to the Legislative Budget Board's fiscal note, the cost of this program would depend on the number of counties that entered into an agreement with DPS. The LBB estimated that if every county participated, the program would cost \$5.3 million in fiscal 2016 and about \$2.3 million in each following year.