

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 1887
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Higher Education
5/18/2015
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

There is a critical need for expanded law enforcement training opportunities in South Texas. While the Texas Workforce Commission projects an estimated 22 percent increase in certified police officer positions for the South Texas region in the next 10 years, access to training opportunities in the region is limited. In fact, there are only four police academies in Hidalgo and Starr Counties that offer basic peace officer licensing courses and that receive certification from the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE).

Moreover, the training provided by these police academies does not result in college credit, which is disappointing to law enforcement professionals who are eager to earn college credit and college degrees in their field. In addition to facing these challenges, there are concerns that TCOLE-certified officers in local police departments are being recruited for positions with state and federal agencies. H.B. 1887 seeks to provide for a well-trained law enforcement community to meet the needs of the South Texas region.

H.B. 1887 amends the Education Code to establish the regional center for public safety excellence to develop and provide education and training for law enforcement personnel in the Rio Grande Valley. The bill requires South Texas College to administer the regional center in partnership with political subdivisions and participating school districts in the Rio Grande Valley.

H.B. 1887 amends current law relating to the establishment of a regional center for public safety excellence in the Rio Grande Valley.

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 F, Chapter 130, Education Code, by adding Section 130.093, as follows:

Sec. 130.093. REGIONAL CENTER FOR PUBLIC SAFETY EXCELLENCE. (a) Defines "commission" and "regional center."

(b) Provides that the regional center for public safety excellence (regional center) is established to develop and provide education and training for law enforcement personnel in the Rio Grande Valley, including:

(1) education and training leading toward an associate of applied science degree or certificate or another public safety or law enforcement-related associate degree or certificate;

(2) a baccalaureate degree awarded under a program authorized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board under Section 130.0012 (Baccalaureate Degree Programs);

(3) Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) officer certification; and

(4) a continuing education certification.

(c) Requires South Texas College to administer the regional center in partnership with political subdivisions and participating school districts in the Rio Grande Valley. Provides that the headquarters of the regional center are located at South Texas College in Pharr, Texas. Authorizes the regional center to use property and facilities at other locations in Hidalgo and Starr Counties.

(d) Requires the regional center to ensure that the program or course curriculum satisfies any requirements imposed by TCOLE under Subchapter F (Training Programs and Schools), Chapter 1701, Occupations Code, for the regional center to operate as a TCOLE-approved training provider under that chapter in developing its training programs and courses.

(e) Authorizes the regional center to solicit and accept gifts and grants from any public or private source for purposes of this section. Authorizes the legislature to appropriate money for purposes of this section.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2015.