

SUBJECT: Allowing police officers and fire fighters to view complaints

COMMITTEE: Urban Affairs — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 7 ayes — Hill, Conley, Bailey, Ehrhardt, Thompson, Tillery, Woolley
0 nays
1 present, not voting — Staples
1 absent — Davila

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 6 — 30-0

WITNESSES: For — Lynwood Moreau, Harris County Deputy Sheriff’s Union; Jim Lyde, Texas Municipal Police Association
Against — none
On — Jimmy Fawcett, Texas Police Chief’s Association; S.C. Van Vleck, Fort Worth Police Department

BACKGROUND: Section 614.021 of the Government Code allows police officers and fire fighters to see written complaints against them prior to any disciplinary action that may be taken. This section applies only to police officers or fire fighters who are not covered by civil service statutes.

DIGEST: CSSB 1013 would eliminate the civil service exemption that prevents police officers and fire fighters from receiving a copy of written complaints against them.
The bill would take effect immediately if approved by two-thirds of the membership of each house.

SUPPORTERS SAY: When a citizen makes a formal complaint against a police officer or fire fighter regarding a situation such as an arrest, a police officer or fire fighter must receive a copy of the written complaint before responding. There is no reason to deny this right to police officers and fire fighters who are

SB 1013
House Research Organization
page 2

under civil service. SB 1013 would simply eliminate this unwarranted distinction.

OPPONENTS SAY: No apparent opposition

NOTES: The Senate-passed version applied only to fire fighters.