

SUBJECT: Accepted uses of a firearm by students for school-sponsored activities

COMMITTEE: Public Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — Eissler, Hochberg, Allen, Aycock, Farias, Olivo, Patrick, Shelton, Weber

0 nays

2 absent — Dutton, Jackson

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered for, but did not testify:* Jazmin Acuna, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition)

Against — None

On — Steve Hall, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

BACKGROUND: Education Code, ch. 37 requires the automatic expulsion of a student who uses, exhibits, or possesses a firearm on school property or while in attendance at a school-sponsored or school-related activity located on or off campus.

DIGEST: HB 1020 would exempt students from expulsion solely for using, exhibiting, or possessing a firearm at an approved target range facility that was not on a school campus if the student were participating in or preparing for a school-sponsored shooting sports competition or educational activity sponsored by or supported by the Parks and Wildlife Department.

The bill would apply beginning with the 2009-2010 school year.

The 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, 2009.

SUPPORTERS SAY: HB 1020 would allow students to participate in school extracurricular activities, such as archery and clay shooting. These activities do not

endanger the lives of the student body, yet students are not allowed to participate in these activities because, even if the competition is held off campus, the student code of conduct prevents a student from possessing the necessary equipment.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

This bill could allow a shooting competition or educational activity on school property, which would allow a firearm on school property, putting the lives of other students potentially at risk. The bill should clarify that a student could possess a firearm only at a school-sponsored activity located off school property.