

- SUBJECT:** Creating a peace officers' mental health grant program
- COMMITTEE:** Public Health — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 11 ayes — Price, Sheffield, Arévalo, Burkett, Coleman, Collier, Cortez, Guerra, Klick, Oliverson, Zedler
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — Todd Radford, Capitol Area Law Enforcement Executive Association and Lakeway Police Department; Greg Hansch, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Texas; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Matt Simpson, ACLU of Texas; Arianna Smith, Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas (CLEAT); Reginald Smith, Communities for Recovery; Jessica Anderson, Houston Police Department; Amanda Boudreault, League of Women Voters of Texas; Bill Kelly, City of Houston Mayor's Office; Gyl Switzer, Mental Health America of Texas; Eric Kunish, National Alliance on Mental Illness Austin Advocacy Chair; Micah Harmon, Sheriffs' Association of Texas; Lee Johnson, Texas Council of Community Centers; Jan Friese, Texas Counseling Association; Mike Gomez and Noel Johnson, Texas Municipal Police Association)
- Against — None
- On — Camille Cain, Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division
- BACKGROUND:** Interested observers note that law enforcement officers may experience trauma in the course of fulfilling their duties and could benefit from programs, practices, and services to help address health issues associated with the trauma.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 2619 would require the Office of the Governor's Criminal Justice Division to establish and administer a grant program through which law enforcement could apply for a grant to implement programs, practices, and services designed to address the direct or indirect emotional harm

suffered by peace officers employed by the law enforcement agency in the course of the officers' duties or as the result of the commission of crimes by other individuals.

The bill would outline the allowed uses of money awarded under the grant program, including mental health counseling and care; personnel costs related to an implemented program, practice, or service; skills training; and evaluation. Information obtained in the administration of a program, practice, or service funded by a grant would be confidential and not be subject to disclosure under the Public Information Act.

A law enforcement agency could not use against a peace officer in a departmental proceeding any information obtained in the administration of a program, practice or service funded by a grant made under the grant program.

The bill would require the Criminal Justice Division to establish eligibility criteria for grant applicants, procedures for grant applications, guidelines related to grant amounts, procedures for evaluating grant applications, and procedures for monitoring the use of an awarded grant and compliance with grant conditions. The division would be required to compare and evaluate the programs, practices, and services implemented by each law enforcement agency that received a grant to determine the most successful programs, practices, and services. The division could contract with a third party to do the comparison and evaluation.

The Criminal Justice Division would include in its biennial report to the Legislature a detailed report of the results and performance of the grant program and could use any available funds to implement the provisions of the bill.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.