

SUBJECT: Administering online instruction for handgun proficiency courses

COMMITTEE: Homeland Security and Public Safety — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 8 ayes — Nevárez, Burns, Hinojosa, Holland, J. Johnson, Metcalf, Schaefer, Wray

0 nays

1 absent — P. King

WITNESSES: For — Kevin Knapp; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Ann Hettinger, Center for the Preservation of American Ideals; Frederick Frazier, Dallas Police Association; Ray Hunt, Houston Police Officers Union; Donald Hathorne)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Harold Carter, Texas State Rifle Association; Angela Gerlich, TSRA Foundation; Mike Cox)

BACKGROUND: Government Code, sec. 411.188 defines requirements and standards for classroom instruction, written examination, and physical demonstration for a handgun proficiency course set by the Department of Public Safety (DPS).

Sec. 411.190 defines qualifications and requirements for a qualified handgun instructor set by DPS.

Some have noted that DPS currently allows for certified gun instructors to pursue continuing education through online instruction and suggest that the classroom portion of handgun safety training also be made available online.

DIGEST: CSHB 3784 would allow an online course provider approved by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to offer the classroom portion of the handgun proficiency course, which must include between four and six

hours of instruction. The approved course provider also could conduct the written part of the proficiency examination through an online secure portal. DPS would be required to publicize, including on its website, a list of approved online course providers with their contact information.

The bill would authorize DPS to certify an online course provider who has at least three years of experience providing online instruction, experience working with government entities, and direct knowledge of handgun training. The approved online course provider would be subject to the same statutory qualifications and requirements as a qualified handgun instructor in order to be authorized to administer a handgun proficiency course. DPS also would be required on request to distribute to an approved online course provider the standards, course requirements, and examinations necessary to administer a handgun proficiency course.

The bill would require handgun license applicants who successfully completed the online classroom instruction portion of the handgun proficiency course to have between one and two hours of range instruction before attempting the physical demonstration of the handgun proficiency course, which could be administered only by a qualified handgun instructor.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.