

- SUBJECT:** Expanding eligibility to conduct a parent-taught driver education course
- COMMITTEE:** Homeland Security and Public Safety — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — P. King, Nevárez, Burns, Hinojosa, Holland, J. Johnson, Metcalf, Schaefer, Wray
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — Patrick Barrett, Driver's Ed in a Box and Collision Free Driver Ed; Joshua Newman, Texas Home School Coalition
- Against — Dorothy DeWalt, Texas Professional Driver Education Association; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Carlos Reyna, Texas Driving Schools)
- On — Brian Francis, Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation; Debora Callahan, Texas Professional Driver Education Association
- BACKGROUND:** Education Code, sec. 1001.112 requires the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation to adopt rules for the approval of a parent-taught driver education course, which may be conducted by certain relatives and legal guardians. Anyone conducting such a course must:
- have held a valid license for three years,
 - not have had a license suspended, revoked, or forfeited for an offense involving a motor vehicle in the past three years;
 - not have been convicted of negligent homicide or driving while intoxicated; and
 - not have more than five points assigned to their license at the time the course begins.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 912 would allow a parent or legal guardian to designate someone to conduct a parent-taught driver education course for his or her child. The

designee would have to be at least 25 years old and meet the other requirements laid out by Education Code, sec. 1001.112, but could not charge a fee for conducting the course. The bill would allow someone convicted of driving while intoxicated more than seven years earlier to conduct a parent-taught driver education course.

CSHB 912 would allow driving schools to teach in multiple classroom locations even if each location did not have the same name as the parent school or was not owned by the parent school. The bill also would remove the requirement that the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) determine that the driving school owners and instructors were of good reputation and character,

TDLR and course providers would be allowed to issue electronic certificates of completion. The required surety bond for driver education course providers would be reduced from \$25,000 to \$10,000.

This 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, 2017.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHB 912 would expand eligibility to conduct parent-taught driver education, relieving a hardship on many parents across the state. Under current law, some parents who are not able or eligible to conduct parent-taught driver education effectively must pay for a traditional driving school. This may heavily burden low-income parents or those who live in rural areas where driving schools may not exist.

The bill would extend the benefit of the parent-taught program by allowing any qualified person close to the family to provide the instruction. Most designees likely would be friends or relatives, and that personal and emotional attachment to the new driver would further encourage the designee to provide quality instruction. Possibly because of this incentive, historically there has been no difference in outcomes between driver education conducted at home as opposed to through a school. This bill would maintain largely the same qualifications for

eligibility as under current law, so it would not reduce public safety. However, it would expand the ability of parents to choose how best to provide quality driving instruction to their children.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

CSHB 912 would expand the parent-taught driver education program too far. Although reducing hardships on parents is a valid goal, not everyone can teach driver education. Individuals conducting driver education should be required to have a background in driving or teaching because they must operate in a fast-paced learning environment. This can be a problem under the existing system, and this bill would only exacerbate it.

NOTES:

CSHB 3337 differs from the bill as filed in several ways, including that the committee substitute would:

- allow individuals other than peace officers and employees of law enforcement agencies to be designated by a parent;
- allow designees to have been convicted of driving while intoxicated more than seven years earlier;
- allow completion certificates to be issued electronically; and
- revise requirements regarding classroom location, owners and instructors of driving schools, and surety bonds held by course providers.