

SUBJECT: Allowing TDLR to halt a massage establishment suspected of trafficking

COMMITTEE: Licensing & Administrative Procedures — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 9 ayes — K. King, Walle, Goldman, Harless, Hernandez, Herrero, T. King, Patterson, Shaheen

1 nays — Schaefer

1 absent — S. Thompson

WITNESSES: For — TJ Gilmore, City of Lewisville; Kevin Deaver, Lewisville Police Department (*Registered, but did not testify*: James Parnell, Dallas Police Association; Heidi Ruiz, Houston Police Department; Ray Hunt, HPOU; Bill Kelly, Mayor’s Office, City of Houston; John Wilkerson, Texas Municipal Police Association)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Mary Winston, Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation)

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that allowing the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation to issue an executive order halting business at a massage establishment where human trafficking activity is suspected would assist law enforcement in shutting down this illegal activity.

DIGEST: CSHB 3579 would allow the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) executive director to issue an emergency order halting the operation of a massage establishment if:

- a law enforcement agency gave notice to TDLR, or TDLR otherwise learned, that the law enforcement agency was investigating the massage establishment for a human trafficking offense; or

- TDLR had reasonable cause to believe that a human trafficking offense was being committed at the massage establishment.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023.

NOTES:

According to the Legislative Budget Board, the fiscal implications of CSHB 3579 could not be determined due to the uncertain nature of the increase in cases as a result of the lower evidentiary standard required for TDLR to issue an emergency order to halt operation.