

SUBJECT: Requiring schools to provide classrooms with silent panic alert technology

COMMITTEE: Youth Health & Safety, Select — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 7 ayes — S. Thompson, Hull, Allison, Capriglione, A. Johnson, Landgraf, Lozano

0 nays

2 absent — Dutton, T. King

WITNESSES: For — Quinn McCall, Texas Classroom Teachers Association, Hannah Burkhauser; Jeffrey Yarbrough; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Tricia Cave, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Caroline Messer, AT&T; Garry Jones, Education Reform Now; Andrew Morrison, Everbridge; John Pitts, Houston ISD; Bill Kelly, Mayor's Office, City of Houston; Bradford Shields, Raptor Technologies; Georgia Bates, SaferWatch; Dwight Harris, Texas Federation of Teachers; Carrie Griffith, Texas State Teachers Association, and seven individuals)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Susan Stewart)

On — Amy Beneski, Texas Association of School Administrators; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Nick Davis, Cory Green, Eric Marin, John Scott, James Terry, Texas Education Agency)

DIGEST: CSHB 669 would require each public school district and open-enrollment charter school to provide each classroom with silent panic alert technology that allowed for immediate contact with district or school emergency services and emergency services agencies, law enforcement agencies, health departments, and fire departments.

To comply with this requirement, a school district or open-enrollment charter school could use funds provided through the school safety allotment or other available funds by using the school or district's customary procurement process.

Silent panic alert technology would not satisfy the requirement for the district or school to ensure employees had classroom access to a telephone or other electronic communication device.

The bill would apply beginning with the 2025-2026 school year.

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, 2023.

**SUPPORTERS  
SAY:**

CSHB 669 would provide schools with an effective and immediate means of contacting emergency services in a crisis. As schools in Texas increasingly face threats of active shooter events, ensuring that schools are prepared for emergencies is critical. CSHB 669 would add a layer of protection for schools by requiring them to be equipped with silent panic alert technology. This technology could help provide relevant emergency services providers with more immediate and accurate information, which would minimize confusion and response time and allow emergency responders to act more effectively and efficiently in the event of a crisis or medical emergency.

CSHB 669 would ensure that all schools received this important safeguard. Many schools already have installed silence panic alert technology or have applied for Silent Panic Alert Technology Grant funding. CSHB would establish consistency across school districts.

The bill would not create an additional cost to the state as the cost of this technology could be funded through certain grants and funds in the school safety allotment.

**CRITICS  
SAY:**

CSHB 669 would not address the core issues driving active shooter events in schools. The state should go further in funding school safety measures.