

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
81R3687 JAM-D

H.B. 529
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Transportation & Homeland Security
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, tow trucks, emergency vehicles, and school and church buses are authorized to use flashing red, white, or blue lights on their vehicles. Other vehicles that are not police vehicles sometimes use blue lights as well, including construction vehicles. Texas law requires a motor vehicle operator to slow down to a speed of 20 miles per hour below the posted speed limit and to move away from a stationary vehicle with its lights flashing. The abundance of vehicles using blue lights can create confusion and noncompliance with laws in place to protect the safety of police officers. Many other states authorize only police vehicles to use flashing blue lights.

H.B. 529 restricts the use of blue lights to authorized emergency vehicles only.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 547.305, Transportation Code, by amending Subsection (c) and adding Subsection (c-1), as follows:

(c) Prohibits a person from operating a motor vehicle equipped with a red or white, rather than red, white, or blue, beacon, flashing, or alternating light unless the equipment meets certain conditions.

(c-1) Prohibits a person from operating a motor vehicle, other than an authorized emergency vehicle, equipped with a blue light.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2009.