

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.S.B. 279
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Education
4/20/2021
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Adolescent suicide and self-inflicted injury are a serious social and public health concern. The rate of suicide among those aged 10 to 24 increased nearly 60 percent between 2007 and 2018, according to a report released in September 2020 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This is a significant increase from where the numbers stood in the early 2000s, remaining relatively stable until 2007. Since then, suicide rates have been on a gradual rise in 42 states, with Texas experiencing an increase of 10.3 percent between 2016 and 2018.

Public schools tend to issue student ID cards to students in high school and oftentimes issue them to students in middle school. Each public institution of higher education issues student ID cards. Some campus-issued cards already include emergency and key contact numbers on the cards. Suicide prevention hotline and/or text line numbers should be printed on student ID cards because students typically have them on their persons, while students may otherwise see this information only sporadically or after searching online.

S.B. 279 requires certain contact information for suicide prevention to be printed on all public school student ID cards for grades 7-12, as well as community colleges and public universities. The goal of this measure is to foster suicide prevention through greater awareness, equipping students as young as 12 years old. Providing an easily accessible suicide prevention telephone hotline number on a student's ID card will be another necessary resource for potential lifesaving help.

(Original Author's / Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

C.S.S.B. 279 amends current law relating to the inclusion of suicide prevention information on certain student identification cards issued by a public school or public institution of higher education.

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 Subchapter G, Chapter 38, Education Code, by adding Section 38.353, as follows:

Sec. 38.353. SUICIDE PREVENTION INFORMATION REQUIRED ON CERTAIN STUDENT IDENTIFICATION CARDS. Provides that each student identification card issued by a public school to a student in grade seven or higher:

- (1) is required to have printed on either side of the card the telephone number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline; and
- (2) is authorized to have printed on either side of the card the telephone number for the Crisis Text Line and a local suicide prevention hotline, if available.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter Z, Chapter 51, Education Code, by adding Section 51.91941, as follows:

Sec. 51.91941. SUICIDE PREVENTION INFORMATION REQUIRED ON STUDENT IDENTIFICATION CARD. (a) Defines "institution of higher education."

(b) Provides that each student identification card issued by an institution of higher education:

(1) is required to have printed on either side of the card the telephone number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and the campus police department or security for the campus at which the student to whom the card is issued regularly attends classes or, if the campus does not have a campus police department or security, a local nonemergency police contact; and

(2) is authorized to have printed on either side of the card the telephone number for the Crisis Text Line and a local suicide prevention hotline, if available.

SECTION 3. (a) Authorizes a public school or public institution of higher education, notwithstanding Sections 38.353 and 51.91941, Education Code, as added by this Act, if, on January 1, 2022, a public school or a public institution of higher education subject to the requirements of Section 38.353 or 51.91941, Education Code, as applicable, has a supply of unissued student identification cards that do not comply with the applicable requirements of those sections, to issue those student identification cards until the supply of cards is depleted.

(b) Provides that Sections 38.353 and 51.91941, Education Code, as added by this Act, apply only to an initial or replacement student identification card issued on or after June 1, 2022.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2021.