

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
88R1661 KBB-D

H.B. 517
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Criminal Justice
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

During a parole hearing, victims can testify to the Board of Pardons and Paroles (board) about their experience and why they do or do not believe the inmate should be released on parole. If the victim has passed away before the parole hearing, however, families will often go testify on the victim's behalf. They currently have the legal right to do so if the victim passed away as a result of the crime (e.g., the victim was murdered), but in Texas they do not currently have a statutory right to testify if the victim's passing was due to something other than the crime itself. These parole hearings can be decades after the crime, so it is not uncommon for the victim to have passed away from something unrelated to the crime between the time of the conviction and the parole hearing. It is currently the practice of the board to allow these families to testify, but the right to do so is not protected in statute.

H.B. 517 codifies the current practice of the board of letting families of victims testify at hearings when the victim passed away due to circumstances unrelated to the crime.

H.B. 517 amends current law relating to the persons who may provide information to a parole panel considering the release of an inmate on parole or to mandatory supervision.

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. Authorizes this Act to be cited as Nancy's Law.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 508.153(e), Government Code, to redefine "close relative of a deceased victim." Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2023.