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<p>HB 2908 By: Hunter/ King, Phil/ Villalba/ Herrero/et al.</p>	<p>Relating to the punishment for a criminal offense committed against a person because of bias or prejudice on the basis of status as a peace officer; increasing a criminal penalty.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence</p>	<p>HB 2908 enhances criminal penalties to the next higher punishable offense for certain offenses committed against a peace officer due to bias or prejudice. Under the bill, increased punishment extends to crimes classified as offenses against the person, arson, criminal mischief, graffiti, unlawful restraint, terroristic threat, and intoxicated assault. Through provisions in Texas statute, punishment for assault extends to both a peace officer or their spouse if a person causes bodily injury. While peace officers certainly face heightened risks in the line of duty, this increase in risk is a direct result of a volatile social and political climate. Furthermore, there are already provisions outlining heightened punishment for offenses against public servants, and this adds a specific occupation to groups of persons protected from bias or prejudice based on certain identifiers that they have little to no choice in being or exhibiting. Hate crime laws protect historically oppressed groups, and those protected characteristics should relate to only immutable characteristics. In this essence, employment does not fall into this category; protecting police officers alongside with other vulnerable populations is likely unconstitutional. Moreover, hate crime laws seek to protect these vulnerable and historically oppressed groups by aiming to rectify disproportionate discriminations and discrepancies they face in housing, education, and employment based on these immutable characteristics.</p>	<p>Will of the House Evaluated by: Katherine Kirages 210-382-4295 Katherine@Texaslsg.org</p>
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