



# Texas Legislative Study Group

An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

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## LSG Floor Report For General State Calendar – Wednesday, March 29, 2023

<p><b>HB 727</b> By: Rose</p>	<p>Relating to the applicability of the death penalty to a capital offense committed by a person with severe mental illness.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence  8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>The Supreme Court's 1986 ruling on Ford v. Wainwright determined executing an individual who could not understand why they were being punished was unconstitutional. The ruling left individual states to establish how they would determine an individual's competency for capital offense cases (cases punishable by the death penalty). However, this has not prevented the execution of individuals with severe mental illnesses such as bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, or a schizoaffective disorder. In Texas, 1.1 million adults live with these disorders, which often come with symptoms like hallucinations, delusions, or an inability to discern reality.</p> <p>HB 727 seeks to remedy this by creating a process in which the courts may determine if someone had a severe mental illness (defined as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or schizoaffective disorders) at the time of the offense. Under HB 727, an expert unconnected with the case would evaluate whether the defendant had a severe mental illness at the time of the alleged crime and report back to the court. If the jury finds that the individual was severely mentally ill at the time of the offense, they may be sentenced to life without parole. The judge may proceed with the capital case procedures if the defendant is not found to have been severely mentally ill.</p> <p>Those with severe mental illnesses are at higher risk for execution, as many cannot participate in their own defense, retain consistent representation, or are susceptible to police pressure. HB 727 would help protect some of our most vulnerable from a sentence they don't understand. Additionally, prohibiting capital punishment for these cases would be the more fiscally responsible and efficient action, as capital punishment is three times more expensive than life in prison. HB 727 does not remove culpability from the defendant but moves us toward a more fair and just system.</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b> Evaluated By: Savannah Lee (281) 900-4980 Savannah@texaslsg.org</p>
<p><b>HB 584</b> By: Capriglione</p>	<p>Relating to the development of a state information technology credential offered by public junior colleges or public technical institutes to address</p>	<p>State Affairs  Vote: 11 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>HB 584 aims to alleviate persistent shortages in the state information resources workforce by establishing an alternative educational pathway and reclassifying educational requirements for entry-level IT positions at state agencies.</p> <p>HB 584 authorizes the Department of Information Resources (DIR) to initiate agreements with public junior college districts and technical institutes to offer a state information technology (IT) credential program. Under the bill, an associate degree coupled with the state IT credential could be substituted for a four-year baccalaureate degree, the current requirement for state agency entry-level IT jobs. HB 584</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b> Evaluated by: Nzingha Williams-Eugene (214) 631-9720 Nzingha@texaslsg.org</p>

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	shortages in the state information resources workforce.		<p>specifies that the state IT credential program must be approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and include a one-year IT apprenticeship.</p> <p>HB 584 works to expand the state’s information technology workforce by decreasing barriers for the DIR, and related agencies, to hire qualified applicants from public junior colleges and technical institutes. Research shows these higher education institutions reach diverse and historically under-served Texans, providing a pathway to educational and economic opportunity.</p>	
<b>HB 624</b> By: Harris, Cody	Relating to emergency medical transport by firefighters of certain patients.	Public Health  11 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	<p>Often, firefighters are the first personnel to arrive in emergencies. Ambulances may not arrive in time to provide care or transport within the first 60 minutes of an injury. This period is known as the golden hour, after which mortality increases substantially.</p> <p>HB 624 enables firefighters to transport sick or injured patients to a healthcare facility in a vehicle other than an emergency medical services (EMS) vehicle under certain conditions. Oklahoma recently passed similar legislation after a firefighter was disciplined for taking a child to the hospital. Under HB 624, a firefighter could transport patients regardless of being a licensed EMS provider if the appropriate EMS provider is notified but unable to provide immediate assistance and the patient's condition allows for transport per that condition's medical and transport protocol. HB 624 requires each EMS and trauma care system across Texas to develop the necessary medical treatment and transport protocols and to provide notice of these protocols to providers and firefighters in the area.</p> <p>HB 624 allows firefighters to transport patients in certain situations when ambulances are not available, potentially providing quicker access to life-saving medical care.</p>	<b>Favorable</b> Evaluated By: Brian Dusablon (281) 789-8955 brian@texaslsg.org
<b>HB 28</b> By: Slawson	Relating to enhancing the punishment for certain conduct constituting the criminal offense of aggravated assault.	Criminal Jurisprudence  9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	<p>Under current law, the penalty for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon resulting in paralyzation or a persistent vegetative state is a first degree felony, unless the victim does not know the perpetrator. If there is no established relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, the maximum penalty is a second degree felony.</p> <p>HB 28 removes the exception regarding an established relationship between the victim and perpetrator and allows for a penalty enhancement to a first degree felony, regardless of the relationship between the parties involved. HB 28 functions to equalize two nearly identical offenses. The relationship between the victim and the perpetrator is irrelevant to the offense itself and has no bearing on how the victim's life has been affected. Equalizing the penalties for the same offense regardless of the involved parties' relationship is a common sense move that is unlikely to cause undue strain on our justice system and will provide more options to prosecutors.</p>	<b>Favorable</b> Evaluated By: Savannah Lee (281) 900-4980 savannah@texaslsg.org