

Dear Legislators,

Please oppose HB 2931. HB 2931 requires officers to ensure that anyone they arrest receives a medical examination, without any regard for whether the individual refuses medical attention. Most agencies already have policies that cover these situations. HB 2932, which creates a database of ambiguously-defined uses or threats of force, unnecessarily conflates cases of alleged misconduct with standard procedures and could dangerously expose officers' personal information. Please do better, and vote NO on these bills.

First, I am shocked at the lack of details on such a bill without any thought to what this looks like and its unintended consequences. I work in an ER and let me make you aware of how things might play out. First, even if the law would require an officer to either offer a medical examination or force one (which seems to be a civil rights violation since even a bringing a person in on a mental health evaluation requires that person to meet a specific criterion for a police hold), that would likely result in the officer bringing the person to the ER.

If that person has no obvious medical complaints and are simply presenting to the ER for a medical clearance per this bill, then 1) it's a misuse of the ER and 2) the person would likely be triaged to the lowest urgency and that will leave the arrestee and the officer potentially waiting for hours in the ER waiting for medical clearance. In this circumstance, I have actually experienced police's decision making on how they proceed with the arrestee be contingent on the ER wait time. As an ER worker, I am aware that ER staff don't have the legal ability to demand someone accept medical care, except in very specific circumstances in which decision-making capacity may be compromised or possibly when the patient is a danger to self or others (and maybe other situations that I am currently not remembering at this time - but they are very specific). So how and why are you placing that responsibility on the officer to demand the patient gets a medical examination if the staff cannot complete an examination on an arrestee who refuses it? Do you expect the officer to demand staff exam an arrestee if the arrestee refuses and staff have to respect that decision? I have seen legal concerns arise even in situations in which a warrant for a blood draw is in violation of the nurse's legal and ethical responsibilities to demand it from a patient who refuses to have their blood drawn. This bill needs to address all the potential legal, civil and ethical concerns for all parties involved, including police and medical staff. Please vote NO on this bill until the intended outcome from this bill first addresses all the unintended outcomes. Thank you.

Veronica Lozano