

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 679  
By: Turner, Sylvester  
Human Services  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Homeless youths are vulnerable to human trafficking and other negative outcomes associated with not having a safe and stable environment in which to live. Because not all homeless youths can be found in shelters, where they are more easily detected by organizations collecting data relating to the population, there is a scarcity of reliable data on how many youths face these challenges. Although anecdotal evidence suggests the number of homeless youths is much higher than officially reported, interested parties contend that determining the scope of the problem would lead to a more accurate picture of the situation and possibly more viable solutions for this vulnerable population. C.S.H.B. 679 seeks to better understand the extent of the problem and the available solutions by providing for a study on homeless youth in Texas.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 679 amends the Government Code to require the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA), in conjunction with other members of the Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless, to conduct a study on homeless youth. The bill defines "homeless youth" as a person who is younger than 25 years of age, including a migratory child as defined by the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including a person who is temporarily allowed to stay in the house of another person due to loss of housing, temporarily living in a motel or hotel, living in an emergency shelter, abandoned in a hospital, or awaiting foster care placement; who has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans; or who is living in a car, park, other public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting.

C.S.H.B. 679 requires TDHCA, in conducting the study, to collect data on the number of homeless youths in Texas, examine the needs of homeless youths and the degree to which current programs are meeting those needs, identify any sources of funding that might be available to provide services to homeless youths, and develop a strategic plan establishing steps to be taken and timelines for reducing youth homelessness in Texas. The bill requires TDHCA, not later than December 1, 2016, to submit a report on the study to the legislature that includes a summary of the information resulting from the study and recommendations for changes in law necessary to provide services to or otherwise assist homeless youths. The bill's provisions regarding the study expire September 1, 2017.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2015.

**COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE**

While C.S.H.B. 679 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following comparison is organized and formatted in a manner that indicates the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

**INTRODUCED**

**HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE**

SECTION 1. Chapter 2306, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter OO to read as follows:

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SUBCHAPTER OO. HOMELESS YOUTH

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Sec. 2306.1101. DEFINITION.

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Sec. 2306.1102. STUDY ON HOMELESS YOUTH. (a) The department, in conjunction with the Department of Family and Protective Services, the Texas Education Agency, and the Texas Homeless Education Office, shall conduct a study on homeless youth.

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(b) In conducting the study, the department shall:

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(1) collect data on the number of homeless youth in this state;

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(2) examine the needs of homeless youth and the degree to which current programs are meeting those needs; and

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(3) identify any sources of funding that might be available to provide services to homeless youth.

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(4) develop a strategic plan establishing steps to be taken and timelines for reducing youth homelessness in this state.

(c) The department shall submit a report on the study to the legislature not later than December 1, 2016. The report must include a summary of the information resulting from the study and recommendations for changes in law necessary to provide services to or otherwise assist homeless youth.

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(d) This section expires September 1, 2017.

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SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not

SECTION 2. Same as introduced version.

receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2015.