

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2858
By: Burns
State Affairs
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties contend that the state needs to do more to protect victims of human trafficking, especially with respect to forced abortions of trafficking victims. C.S.H.B. 2858 seeks to address this issue by requiring specific signage at abortion facilities directing trafficking victims to the national organization that assists trafficking victims and by enhancing penalties for certain assaultive offenses committed against a pregnant individual to force an abortion.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill expressly does one or more of the following: creates a criminal offense, increases the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or changes the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2858 amends the Health and Safety Code to require an abortion facility to display separate signs in each restroom and patient consulting room that meet certain requirements and contain specified information regarding forced abortion and human trafficking. The bill requires those signs to be in English and Spanish and, if the abortion facility is located in a political subdivision required to provide election materials in a language other than English or Spanish under state law, in that language as well. The bill requires the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission to adopt rules as necessary to implement and enforce these provisions not later than December 1, 2017. An abortion facility is expressly not required to comply with the signage requirements before January 1, 2018.

C.S.H.B. 2858 amends the Penal Code to enhance the penalty for human trafficking from a second degree felony to a first degree felony if the commission of the offense results in the death of an unborn child of the person who is trafficked. The bill enhances the penalty for intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to another from a Class A misdemeanor to a third degree felony if the offense is committed against a pregnant individual to force the individual to have an abortion and enhances the penalty for intentionally or knowingly threatening another with imminent bodily injury or intentionally or knowingly causing certain physical contact with another from a Class C misdemeanor to a Class A misdemeanor if the offense is committed against a pregnant individual to force the individual to have an abortion.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2017.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 2858 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

SECTION 1. Chapter 245, Health and Safety Code, is amended by adding Section 245.025 to read as follows:

Sec. 245.025. HUMAN TRAFFICKING SIGNS REQUIRED. (a) An abortion facility shall display a sign

in accordance with this section in each patient admission area, waiting room, restroom, and patient consulting room. The sign must state:

WARNING: Obtaining forced labor or services is a crime under Texas law. If you or someone you know is a victim of such a crime, you are encouraged to call the national human trafficking hotline at 1-888-373-7888. You may remain anonymous.

(b) A sign required under this section must be in English and Spanish. If an abortion facility is located in a political subdivision required to provide election materials in a language other than English or Spanish under Section 272.011, Election Code, the sign must also be in that language.

(c) A sign required under this section must be at least 8-1/2 by 11 inches in size and displayed in a conspicuous manner clearly visible to the public and employees of an abortion facility. The notice must cover at least four-fifths of the sign.

(d) The executive commissioner shall adopt rules as necessary to implement and enforce this section.

SECTION 2. Section 20A.02(b), Penal Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b) Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, an offense under this section is a felony of the second degree. An offense

HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

SECTION 1. Chapter 245, Health and Safety Code, is amended by adding Section 245.025 to read as follows:

Sec. 245.025. HUMAN TRAFFICKING SIGNS REQUIRED. (a) An abortion facility shall display separate signs, in English, Spanish, and any additional language as required by Subsection (b), side by side in accordance with this section in each restroom and patient consulting room. The signs must include the following information:

(1) no person, including an individual's parents, may force any individual to have an abortion;

(2) it is illegal for a person to force an individual to engage in sexual acts;

(3) a woman who needs help may call or text a state or national organization that assists victims of human trafficking and forced abortions; and

(4) the toll-free number of an organization described by Subdivision (3).

(b) Signs required under this section must be in English and Spanish. If an abortion facility is located in a political subdivision required to provide election materials in a language other than English or Spanish under Section 272.011, Election Code, the facility shall display a separate sign in that language.

(c) Signs required under this section must be at least 8-1/2 by 11 inches in size and displayed in a conspicuous manner clearly visible to the public and employees of an abortion facility. The notice must cover at least four-fifths of the sign.

(d) The executive commissioner shall adopt rules as necessary to implement and enforce this section.

SECTION 2. Section 20A.02(b), Penal Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b) Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, an offense under this section is a felony of the second degree. An offense

under this section is a felony of the first degree if:

(1) the applicable conduct constitutes an offense under Subsection (a)(5), (6), (7), or (8), regardless of whether the actor knows the age of the child at the time the actor commits the offense; ~~or~~

(2) the commission of the offense results in the death of the person who is trafficked; or

(3) the commission of the offense results in the death of an unborn child of the person who is trafficked in violation of Chapter 19.

SECTION 3. Section 22.01, Penal Code, is amended by adding Subsection (c-1) to read as follows:

(c-1) Notwithstanding Subsections (b), (b-1), and (c), an offense under Subsection (a)(1) or (2) is a felony of the second degree

under this section is a felony of the first degree if:

(1) the applicable conduct constitutes an offense under Subsection (a)(5), (6), (7), or (8), regardless of whether the actor knows the age of the child at the time the actor commits the offense; ~~or~~

(2) the commission of the offense results in the death of the person who is trafficked; or

(3) the commission of the offense results in the death of an unborn child of the person who is trafficked.

SECTION 3. Sections 22.01(b) and (c), Penal Code, are amended to read as follows:

(b) An offense under Subsection (a)(1) is a Class A misdemeanor, except that the offense is a felony of the third degree if the offense is committed against:

(1) a person the actor knows is a public servant while the public servant is lawfully discharging an official duty, or in retaliation or on account of an exercise of official power or performance of an official duty as a public servant;

(2) a person whose relationship to or association with the defendant is described by Section 71.0021(b), 71.003, or 71.005, Family Code, if:

(A) it is shown on the trial of the offense that the defendant has been previously convicted of an offense under this chapter, Chapter 19, or Section 20.03, 20.04, 21.11, or 25.11 against a person whose relationship to or association with the defendant is described by Section 71.0021(b), 71.003, or 71.005, Family Code; or

(B) the offense is committed by intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly impeding the normal breathing or circulation of the blood of the person by applying pressure to the person's throat or neck or by blocking the person's nose or mouth;

(3) a person who contracts with government to perform a service in a facility as defined by Section 1.07(a)(14), Penal Code, or Section 51.02(13) or (14), Family Code, or an employee of that person:

(A) while the person or employee is engaged in performing a service within the scope of the contract, if the actor knows the person or employee is authorized by government to provide the service; or

if the actor intentionally or knowingly used force or the threat of force to compel a woman to receive an abortion.

(See added subsection (c-1) above.)

SECTION 4. (a) Not later than December 1, 2017, the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission shall adopt the rules necessary to implement Section 245.025, Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act.

(b) An abortion facility is not required to comply with Section 245.025, Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act, before January 1, 2018.

SECTION 5. Sections 20A.02 and 22.01, Penal Code, as amended by this Act, apply only to an offense committed on or after the effective date of this Act. An offense committed before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect on the date the offense was committed, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose. For purposes of this section, an offense was committed before the effective date of this

(B) in retaliation for or on account of the person's or employee's performance of a service within the scope of the contract;

(4) a person the actor knows is a security officer while the officer is performing a duty as a security officer; [øø]

(5) a person the actor knows is emergency services personnel while the person is providing emergency services; or

(6) a pregnant individual to force the individual to have an abortion.

(c) An offense under Subsection (a)(2) or (3) is a Class C misdemeanor, except that the offense is:

(1) a Class A misdemeanor if the offense is committed under Subsection (a)(3) against an elderly individual or disabled individual, as those terms are defined by Section 22.04; [øø]

(2) a Class B misdemeanor if the offense is committed by a person who is not a sports participant against a person the actor knows is a sports participant either:

(A) while the participant is performing duties or responsibilities in the participant's capacity as a sports participant; or

(B) in retaliation for or on account of the participant's performance of a duty or responsibility within the participant's capacity as a sports participant; or

(3) a Class A misdemeanor if the offense is committed against a pregnant individual to force the individual to have an abortion.

SECTION 4. Same as introduced version.

SECTION 5. Same as introduced version.

Act if any element of the offense was committed before that date.

SECTION 6. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017.

SECTION 6. Same as introduced version.