

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2607
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International Relations & Economic Development
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Subsidized child care for low-income working families does not consistently provide the high-quality child care choices for these families that they deserve and that Texas taxpayers expect from their considerable investment in such support. There is a concern that children and families in Texas who would benefit the most from high-quality child care are among the least likely to receive it, even if the state is subsidizing that care.

High-quality child care available through the Texas Rising Star Program not only benefits these working families but also benefits all Texas schools by ensuring that young children are better prepared for prekindergarten. But there are ongoing concerns that there are not enough qualified providers offering high-quality care through that program. H.B. 2607 seeks to address these concerns by including an entry level rating for child-care providers to participate in the Texas Rising Star program and requiring TWC to assess the number of 3-star and 4-star rated child-care providers participating in partnerships with public school districts and public charter schools.

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

H.B. 2607 amends the Government Code to provide the following with respect to the Texas Rising Star Program:

- the program must include an entry level rating for child-care providers and a maximum length of time a provider may participate at the entry level rating;
- a child-care provider, for qualification for the entry level rating, must meet the minimum quality standards that qualify the provider to receive technical assistance and support under the program; and
- a provider participating at the entry level rating is not eligible for increased reimbursement rates.

H.B. 2607 amends the Labor Code, with respect to the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) annual evaluation of allocation formulas for child-care development funds, to provide the following:

- the TWC must assess the number of 3-star and 4-star rated child-care providers participating in partnerships with public school districts and public charter schools based on data provided by the Texas Education Agency, as necessary; and
- the number of places that are reserved for certain participants in the program are reserved by each local workforce development board authorized under child-care provider contract agreements.

H.B. 2607 requires each local workforce development board to inform the local school districts and open-enrollment charter schools in the workforce development area regarding opportunities to partner with child-care providers in the board's area to expand access to and provide facilities for prekindergarten programs.

H.B. 2607, with respect to child-care provider contract agreements, changes the requirement for a local workforce development board to update the report evaluating child-care provider contracts every six months to require that the update instead be made every 12 months. The bill provides the following:

- a local workforce development board may allow a child-care provider with whom the board contracts to identify and refer to the board children who could be eligible for subsidized child-care services; and
- in making such a referral, the child-care provider must consider whether the child or the child's parent is a member of a group entitled to a priority in the provision of services provided by or in cooperation with the TWC, including a priority under Family Code provisions relating to the transitional living services program.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.