

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 619
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International Relations & Economic Development
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Child-care workers have become an essential asset to families with working parents and young children. Not only do these workers provide care, but they are engrained in the child's academic, health, and social development. Although they play a critical part, child-care workers often lack adequate pay, access to public benefits, and opportunities for career growth. It has been suggested that the profession lacks a framework to improve professional qualifications and standards of living that is commensurate with the vital role these workers serve. C.S.H.B. 619 seeks to remedy this situation by providing for a strategic plan that will collect data and recommend changes for strengthening and improving the quality of the child-care workforce 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. 619 amends the Labor Code to require the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to prepare a strategic plan for improving the quality of the infant, toddler, preschool, and school-age child-care workforce in Texas that includes the following:

- recommendations for local workforce development boards to improve, sustain, and support the child-care workforce;
- recommendations for increasing compensation for and reducing turnover of child-care workers;
- recommendations for eliminating racial and gender pay disparity in the child-care workforce;
- recommendations for increasing paid opportunities for professional development and education for child-care workers, including apprenticeships;
- best practices from local workforce development boards and other programs designed to support child-care workers;
- recommendations for increasing participation in the Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System;
- recommendations for public and private institutions of higher education to take the following actions:
 - increase the use of articulation agreements with school districts and open-enrollment charter schools; and
 - assist in the education and training of child-care workers;

- specific recommendations for improving the infant and toddler child-care workforce; and
- a timeline and benchmarks for the TWC and local workforce development boards to implement recommendations from the strategic plan.

C.S.H.B. 619 requires the TWC to convene a workgroup to assist in the development of the strategic plan. The workgroup must include child-care providers, community stakeholders, and child-care workers. The bill requires the TWC, in creating the strategic plan, to use information provided by the workgroup and certain demographic and compensation data for child-care workers and for a representative sample set of child-care facilities in Texas.

C.S.H.B. 619 requires the TWC to provide the strategic plan to the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the speaker of the house of representatives not later than December 31, 2022, and to update the strategic plan every three years.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 619 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute includes a specification that the strategic plan for improving the quality of the child-care workforce is for improving the quality of the infant, toddler, preschool, and school-age child-care workforce.

The substitute includes the following additional components of the strategic plan:

- specific recommendations for improving the infant and toddler child-care workforce; and
- a timeline and benchmarks for the TWC and local workforce development boards to implement recommendations from the strategic plan.

The substitute includes provisions requiring the TWC to convene a workgroup to assist in the development of the strategic plan, providing for the workgroup's composition, and requiring the TWC to use information provided by the workgroup in creating the strategic plan.

The substitute replaces the requirement for the TWC to use certain demographic and compensation data for each child-care facility in Texas with a requirement to use such data for a representative sample set of child-care facilities in Texas.