

SUBJECT: Buffalo Soldier Heritage pilot program for at-risk youth

COMMITTEE: Juvenile Justice and Family Issues — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 7 ayes — Goodman, Cook, Brady, De La Garza, Naishtat, Puente, Van de Putte

0 nays

2 absent — H. Cuellar, Williamson

WITNESSES: For — Allen Commander, Eddie Harrison, Lee N. Coffee Jr., Guy R. Manning, Sr., Darryl E. Peaks

Against — None

DIGEST: HB 2031 would require the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission (TJPC) to establish a Buffalo Soldier Heritage pilot program. The program would focus on the Buffalo Soldiers — black Civil War veterans sent to the West to build roads, set up telegraph lines and protect settlers. The program would bring at-risk youth, ages 13 to 18, into experiences similar to those of the soldiers and teach them history, camping skills, discipline, responsibility and self-esteem.

The commission would develop rules and a timetable for implementation of the program in Bexar, Dallas, Tom Green and Washington counties. An advisory council would be established and a program officer would be designated for each county.

The TJPC would provide grants for the program, could contract with colleges to develop the pilot program's curriculum, and could contract with private entities to develop the program.

The TJPC would report to the governor and the 75th and 76th Legislatures on the effectiveness of the program.