

- SUBJECT:** Expanding a border region technology training pilot program
- COMMITTEE:** Border and International Affairs — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 4 ayes — Chavez, Griggs, Canales, Castro
- 0 nays
- 2 absent — Merritt, Riddle
- WITNESSES:** For — Virginia Price, Alliance for Work; Jason Sabo, Center for Public Policy Priorities; Oscar Orozco; Guadalupe Rueda; (*Registered, but did not testify:*) Deborah Kastrin, Texas Border Infrastructure Coalition; Joe Sanchez, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund; Terral Smith, El Paso Chamber of Commerce; Ana Yanez-Correa, Texas League of United Latin American Citizens
- Against — None
- On — Anson Green, Texas Workforce Commission
- BACKGROUND:** The 77th Legislature in 2001 enacted HB 2593 by Chavez and Solis, allowing the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to establish and implement a pilot program in an urban community, a rural community, and a community in the area of the Texas-Mexico border to provide adult technology training for state residents who are first-generation U.S. citizens or workers who have been displaced by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) or other changes in the state economy.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 2975 would allow TWC to establish and implement a Texas-Mexico border region technology training pilot program under which the commission competitively could procure adult technology training for Texas workers who had been displaced as a result of trade dislocations or other changes in the state economy.
- TWC could use existing state-funded technology infrastructures and curriculum and instruction models developed for the original technology

training pilot program. TWC could obtain funds for the pilot program to the extent possible from any state, federal or private source and could collaborate with appropriate federal and state agencies and local workforce development boards to implement the pilot program.

TWC would have to report every two years to the governor, lieutenant governor, and House speaker on the pilot program's status and results. Authorization for the program would expire September 1, 2007.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2003.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHB 2975 would allow TWC to expand into additional border communities a pilot project that has been successful in providing technology training for displaced workers in El Paso. TWC and its partners have developed innovative approaches and curriculum materials for adult workers displaced by changes in the local economy. In collaboration with business partners, the program has helped train workers for jobs in health-care institutions and banking. This successful approach should be expanded to benefit displaced workers in other parts of the state.

The expanded pilot program would incur no direct costs to the state. The bill would authorize TWC to direct appropriate funding from federal and state sources to the program.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.

NOTES:

The committee substitute amended the original version of the bill by requiring TWC to report on the program's progress every two years.