

- SUBJECT:** Establishing sex trafficking prevention and treatment programs
- COMMITTEE:** Public Health — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — S. Thompson, Frank, Guerra, Lucio, Ortega, Price, Sheffield, Zedler
- 0 nays
- 3 absent — Wray, Allison, Coleman
- WITNESSES:** For — Jessica Anderson, Houston Police Department; Lisa Michelle, No Strings Attached Outreach; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Drucilla Tigner, ACLU of Texas; Jason Sabo, Children at Risk; Claire Bocchini, Doctors for Change; Will Francis, National Association of Social Workers-Texas Chapter; Chris Kaiser, Texas Association Against Sexual Assault; Krista Del Gallo, Texas Council on Family Violence; Reginald Smith, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition; Monty Wynn, Texas Municipal League; Lee Nichols, TexProtects; Piper Nelson, The SAFE Alliance; Knox Kimberly, Upbring; and 18 individuals)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Bobby Pounds, Comptroller of Public Accounts; Aimee Snoddy, Office of the Governor-Public Safety Office; Andrea Sparks, Office of the Governor; Steve Glazier and Elizabeth Newlin, UT Health Houston)
- BACKGROUND:** Some observers have noted that while there are state-level initiatives to address human trafficking, many municipalities lack financial resources to implement programs and strategies in their respective communities to adequately address the prevalence of sex trafficking.
- DIGEST:** HB 1113 would establish a treatment program for victims of child sex trafficking and create sex trafficking prevention grant programs for municipalities and local law enforcement agencies.

Treatment program. The bill would require the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), in collaboration with a designated health-related institution of higher education and the Child Sex Trafficking Prevention Unit, to establish a program to improve the quality and accessibility of care for victims of child sex trafficking.

HHSC would designate a health-related institution of higher education to operate the program. This institution would be charged with improving the quality and accessibility of care by:

- dedicating units at the institution to provide inpatient and outpatient care for victims of child sex trafficking;
- creating research and workforce expansion opportunities related to treatment of child sex trafficking victims; and
- assisting other health-related institutions of higher education establish similar programs.

In addition to money appropriated by the Legislature, the designated institution could accept gifts, grants, and donations from any public or private person to carry out the program's purpose.

Municipal matching grant program. The bill would require HHSC to administer a matching grant program that would award grants to provide initial money for the establishment of municipal sex trafficking prevention programs.

Municipalities could apply to the commission for a matching grant. To qualify for a grant, an applicant would have to develop a media campaign and appoint a municipal employee to oversee the program and would be required to provide proof that the applicant could secure municipal money in an amount at least equal to the awarded grant amount.

An applicant also would have to collaborate with a local institution of higher education to create and submit a needs assessment outlining:

- the prevalence of sex trafficking crimes in the municipality;
- strategies for reducing the number of sex trafficking crimes; and
- the program's need for state funding to supplement the municipal funding.

HHSC would award matching grants to each municipality that demonstrated the most effective strategies for reducing the number of sex trafficking crimes and the greatest need for state funding.

In addition to money appropriated by the Legislature, HHSC could solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations from any source to administer and finance the matching grant program.

Law enforcement grant program. The bill would require the Office of the Governor, in collaboration with the Child Sex Trafficking Prevention Unit, to administer a grant program that would award grants to local law enforcement agencies to train local law enforcement officers to recognize signs of sex trafficking. Law enforcement agencies could seek grants by applying to the governor's office in the form and manner prescribed by the office.

In addition to money appropriated by the Legislature, the governor's office could solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations from any source to administer and finance the grant program.

Other provisions. The bill would require the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts to bar a vendor from participating in state contracts if the vendor took action that directly supported or promoted human trafficking.

As soon as practicable after the bill's effective date, the bill would require HHSC and the governor's office to adopt rules to implement the bill's provisions.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019, and would apply only to a contract entered into on or after that date.