

SUBJECT: Requiring child abuse prevention training for certain school administrators

COMMITTEE: Public Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 12 ayes — Huberty, Bernal, Allen, Allison, Ashby, K. Bell, M. González, K. King, Meyer, Sanford, Talarico, VanDeaver

1 absent — Dutton

WITNESSES: For — James Caruthers, Children at Risk; Columba Wilson; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Betsy Singleton, League of Women Voters of Texas; Bill Kelly, City of Houston Mayor's Office; Christine Yanas, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc.; Alissa Sughrue, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Texas; Will Francis, National Association of Social Workers-Texas Chapter; Kathryn Freeman, Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission; Jan Friese, Texas Counseling Association and Texas School Counselor Association; Jose Flores and Allison Franklin, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition; Kyle Ward, Texas PTA; Lee Nichols, TexProtects; Nataly Saucedo, United Ways of Texas; Lisa Flores)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Matt Montano, TEA)

DIGEST: HB 403 would require independent school district trustees and superintendents to complete training on identifying and reporting potential victims of sexual abuse, human trafficking, and other maltreatment of children.

Trustees would be required to complete one hour of training every two years. Superintendents would be required to complete at least two and a half hours of training every five years.

Superintendents subject to continuing education requirements immediately before the effective date of the bill would not be required to

comply with the bill for any continuing education requirements period that ended before January 1, 2021.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2019.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 403 would protect children in Texas schools by equipping school district leadership with the tools to identify and report incidents of human trafficking and sexual abuse. Better understanding the risks would allow administrators to respond appropriately in their districts based on the local prevalence of sexual abuse and human trafficking and the specific needs of the school community.

By requiring training to be repeated every few years, the bill would ensure that school district leadership stayed up to date on the constantly changing nature of human trafficking in Texas.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

The frequency with which the training required by HB 403 would need to be repeated could be unnecessary and could burden school administrators.

**OTHER
OPPONENTS
SAY:**

HB 403 could better protect students if the training specifically addressed the increased risks faced by children with disabilities. The bill also could be improved by explicitly requiring administrators to be trained in trauma-informed care.