

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1489
By: Ellis
Finance
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DIGEST

Currently, Texas law does not provide for an adult literacy account in the general revenue fund. According to the 1994 Texas Adult Literacy Survey, more than six million Texas adults are functionally illiterate. Some characterize adult literacy services in Texas as a patchwork of service providers, funding sources, and public and private interests. At present, the Texas Council on Workforce and Economic Development has the responsibility of coordinating the development and maintenance of a literacy services delivery system to ensure the most efficient use of resources to meet adult education goals.

S.B. 1489 would create an adult literacy account in the general revenue fund composed of 10 percent of excess lottery funds in each fiscal biennium, if applicable, to fund community-based adult literacy programs. This bill also creates an advisory committee to administer the account, and provides specific performance goals for the statewide coordination of adult literacy services through the Council on Workforce and Economic Competitiveness.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.B. 1489 creates the adult literacy account in the general revenue fund and authorizes the Texas Workforce Commission to make grants from the interest earned in the account to adult literacy programs that will effectively use the grant to further adult literacy in Texas. This bill also requires the Council on Workforce and Economic Competitiveness to take certain actions related to the improvement of literacy in the state.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is granted to the Texas Workforce Commission under SECTION 2 (Sections 308.001 and 308.002, Government Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 466.355, Government Code, by adding Subsection (c), to require the comptroller, on the last day of each state fiscal biennium, to transfer to the adult literacy account in the general revenue fund from the unobligated portion of the general revenue fund an amount equal to 10 percent of the amount, if any, by which revenue transferred to the unobligated portion of the general revenue fund for that biennium from the state lottery account exceeded the revenue that the comptroller had estimated, at the time the comptroller certified the general appropriations bill for that biennium, would be transferred to the unobligated portion of the general revenue fund for that biennium from the state lottery account.

SECTION 2. Amends Title 4B, Labor Code, by adding Chapter 308, as follows:

CHAPTER 308. LITERACY

Sec. 308.001. STATE COORDINATION OF LITERACY PROGRAMS. Defines "council." Sets forth the duties of the Council on Workforce and Economic Competitiveness (council) in regards to literacy programs. Authorizes the Texas Workforce Commission (commission) to award literacy grants out of state, local, federal, and private money available to the commission for that purpose. Requires grants to be awarded under guidelines set by the

commission. Sets forth requirements regarding the guidelines. Authorizes the commission to establish a Texas literacy trust fund for the purpose of collecting private funds for distribution to community literacy programs. Sets forth additional provisions regarding the Texas literacy trust fund.

Sec. 308.002. ADULT LITERACY ACCOUNT. Provides that the adult literacy program is established as an account in the general revenue fund. Sets forth the contents of the adult literacy account. Authorizes the commission to make grants from the interest earned by the adult literacy account to adult literacy programs that the commission determines will effectively use the grant to further adult literacy in the state. Authorizes a grant to be made only to fund a program operated by a nonprofit organization approved by the commission or by a consortium or association that includes a nonprofit organization approved by the commission as a principal participant. Prohibits the commission from distributing the principal of the adult literacy account. Requires the commission to establish an advisory committee to assist the commission in administering this section. Requires the commission to establish the terms of the appointed members of the advisory committee. Sets forth provisions regarding the makeup of the advisory committee. Requires the commission to adopt rules for the awarding and distribution of grants under this section.

SECTION 3. Repealer: Section 481.026, Government Code (Duties of Literacy Council; Interagency Work Group - Texas Department of Commerce).

SECTION 4. (a) Effective date: September 1, 1997.

(b) Provides that on the effective date of this Act, all funds and accounts established under Section 481.026, Government Code, including the Texas literacy trust fund, are transferred from the management of the Texas Department of Commerce to the management of the Texas Workforce Commission under Section 308.001, Labor Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 5. Emergency clause.