

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
81R22298 JD-F

S.B. 2500  
By: Carona  
Transportation & Homeland Security  
4/7/2009  
As Filed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

There is a need to raise awareness and/or funds for certain causes. Specifically, there are no specialty license plates for the United States (U.S.) Merchant Marine Academy, the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences Academy, or the Texas Buffalo Soldiers. Also, there is no specialty license plate that reads "Choose Life."

As proposed, S.B. 2500 requires the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to issue specialty license plates for persons who are graduates of the U.S. Military Academy, the U.S. Naval Academy, the U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, or the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences Academy, and are current or former commissioned officers of the U.S. armed forces.

S.B. 2500 requires TxDOT to issue specially designed license plates that include the words "Choose Life," design the license plates in consultation with the attorney general, and deposit the remainder of the fee for issuance of license plates in the state treasury to the credit of the Choose Life account. This bill requires the attorney general to establish an advisory committee and by rule, guidelines relating to the expenditure of money credited to the Choose Life account and authorizes money received by an eligible organization to be spent only for certain uses.

S.B. 2500 requires TxDOT to issue specially designed license plates to honor the Texas Buffalo Soldiers.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the attorney general in SECTION 4 (Section 402.035, Government Code) of this bill.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Section 504.309, Transportation Code, as follows:

Sec. 504.309. New heading: FEDERAL SERVICE ACADEMY LICENSE PLATES. Requires the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to issue specialty license plates for persons who are graduates of the United States (U.S.) Military Academy, the U.S. Naval Academy, the U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, or the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences Academy, and are current or former commissioned officers of the U.S. armed forces. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter G, Chapter 504, Transportation Code, by amending Section 504.659, as follows:

Sec. 504.659. TEXAS BUFFALO SOLDIERS LICENSE PLATES. Requires TxDOT to issue specially designed license plates to honor the Texas Buffalo Soldiers.

SECTION 3. Amends Subchapter G, Chapter 504, Transportation Code, by adding Section 504.660, as follows:

Sec. 504.660. CHOOSE LIFE LICENSE PLATES. (a) Requires TxDOT to issue specially designed license plates that include the words "Choose Life," and to design the license plates in consultation with the attorney general.

(b) Requires TxDOT, after deduction of TxDOT's administrative costs, to deposit the remainder of the fee for issuance of license plates under this section in the state treasury to the credit of the Choose Life account established by Section 402.035, Government Code.

SECTION 4. Amends Subchapter B, Chapter 402, Government Code, by adding Sections 402.035 and 402.036, as follows:

Sec. 402.035. CHOOSE LIFE ACCOUNT. (a) Provides that the Choose Life account is a separate account in the general revenue fund and is composed of money deposited to the credit of the account under Section 504.660, Transportation Code, and gifts, grants, donations, and legislative appropriations.

(b) Provides that the attorney general administers the Choose Life account and is authorized to spend money credited to the account only to make grants to an eligible organization and defray the cost of administering the account.

(c) Prohibits the attorney general from discriminating against an eligible organization because it is a religious or nonreligious organization.

(d) Authorizes the attorney general to accept gifts, donations, and grants from any source for the benefit of the account.

(e) Requires the attorney general by rule to establish guidelines for the expenditure of money credited to the Choose Life account, and reporting and other mechanisms necessary to ensure that the money is spent in accordance with this section.

(f) Authorizes money received by an eligible organization under this section to be spent only to provide for the material needs of pregnant women who are considering placing their children for adoption, including the provision of clothing, housing, prenatal care, food, utilities, and transportation, to provide for the needs of infants who are awaiting placement with adoptive parents, to provide training and advertising relating to adoption, and to provide pregnancy testing or pre-adoption or postadoption counseling, but is prohibited from being used to pay an administrative, legal, or capital expense.

(g) Defines "eligible organization."

Sec. 402.036. CHOOSE LIFE ADVISORY COMMITTEE. (a) Requires the attorney general to appoint a seven-member Choose Life advisory committee.

(b) Requires the committee to meet at least twice a year or as called by the attorney general, assist the attorney in developing rules under Section 402.035(e), and review and make recommendations to the attorney general on applications submitted to the attorney general for grants funded with money credited to the Choose Life account.

(c) Provides that members of the committee serve without compensation and are not entitled to reimbursement for expenses. Provides that each member serves a term of four years, with the terms of three or four members expiring on January 31 of each odd-numbered year.

SECTION 5. Effective date: September 1, 2009.