

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center

H.B. 553  
By: White et al. (Miles)  
Administration  
5/22/2017  
Engrossed

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

Relating to the creation of a task force to identify opportunities for academic credit and industry recognition for inmates of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 19 (Schools in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice), Education Code, by adding Section 19.012, as follows:

Sec. 19.012. TASK FORCE ON ACADEMIC CREDIT AND INDUSTRY RECOGNITION. (a) Requires the Windham School District (district), in consultation with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), to establish a task force to review the work or other productive activities of prisoners.

- (b) Sets forth the composition of the task force.
- (c) Requires the governor to designate a member of the task force to serve as presiding officer.
- (d) Requires that a vacancy on the task force be filled in the same manner as the initial appointment.
- (e) Prohibits a member of the task force from receiving compensation for service on the task force, but entitles that member to reimbursement for certain expenses incurred in performing task force duties.
- (f) Authorizes the task force to accept gifts and grants from any source to be used to carry out a function of the task force.
- (g) Requires the task force to meet at least quarterly at the call of the presiding officer and at other times as determined by the presiding officer.
- (h) Requires the task force to conduct an ongoing comprehensive review of the work or other productive activities in which prisoners are engaged, and to identify opportunities for the awarding of certain academic credit or industry recognition for engaging in that work or activity.
- (i) Requires the district, in consultation with TDCJ, the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), to determine the actions necessary for obtaining certain academic credit or industry recognition.

(j) Requires the task force, not less than once every four years, to submit to the governor, lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the standing committees of the legislature having jurisdiction over TDCJ, a report summarizing the task force's review of prisoner work and activity, and the district's actions with regard to obtaining academic credit or industry recognition. Requires the district to provide the task force with any information necessary to complete the report.

(k) Exempts the task force from the provisions of Chapter 2110 (State Agency Advisory Committees), Government Code.

(l) Requires the task force to submit the first report not later than December 31, 2020. Provides that this subsection expires February 1, 2021.

SECTION 2. Requires the executive director of TDJC, the superintendent of the district, the commissioner of higher education, the executive director of TWC, and the governor to appoint members to the task force by a certain date and in a certain manner.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2017.