

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
85R11305 SMT-D

S.B. 2027
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Fully integrated employment helps intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) consumers to be healthier, safer, and happier. It also maximizes opportunities for IDD consumers to be rewarded for their labor. Disability Rights Texas' report, *Living on a Dime and Left Behind*, highlighted the struggles of an IDD population being paid less than minimum wage in sheltered workshops. According to the report, individuals working in sheltered workshops were paid as little as a penny per hour, while the average lowest wage was 15 cents per hour.

Opportunities for individuals with IDD to receive proper training for integrated work settings is not what it could be, and probably not what it should be. Sheltered workshops, where many employed IDD consumers work, do not prepare the individuals to transition beyond their current position. Many of the tasks the individuals perform in sheltered workshops are below the individuals' respective capabilities, and do not serve to develop transferrable skills that would enable the individuals to transition to a fully integrated employment setting.

The opportunity for diversity in IDD consumer employment is limited. In many cases, individuals who transition into fully integrated work settings find themselves having relatively few options available. Among the most common sectors of employment for the population is janitorial work. Other avenues that may be appropriate for IDD consumers, including manufacturing and clerical positions, elude interested individuals because they lack proper training.

S.B. 2027 would require the Human and Health Services Commission and the Texas Workforce Commission to conduct a region-oriented statewide survey of vocational training programs available to IDD consumers. Working jointly, the agencies would survey training opportunities available for individuals with IDD and determine where those opportunities should be improved or expanded. Additionally, the agencies would propose strategies to place trained individuals with IDD into fulfilling jobs, incorporating existing capacity as well as proposing improvements to training programs.

As the nation moves beyond sheltered workshops, Texas needs a plan to ensure individuals with IDD have a clear pathway toward fully integrated employment. Adult services for individuals with IDD simply cannot meet the demand. Perhaps the best use of resources to expand adult services would be training the individuals so they can enter the workforce. This study would provide a roadmap toward that goal, and the regional emphasis would ensure that successful programs that could be modeled elsewhere would be highlighted.

As proposed, S.B. 2027 amends current law relating to a study to evaluate by region training and employment opportunities in this state for individuals with an intellectual disability.

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. STUDY ON TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY. (a) Requires the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) in conjunction with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to conduct a study regarding occupational training programs available in this state for individuals with an intellectual disability.

(b) Requires the study to determine regions in this state where the training programs should be improved or expanded and determine strategies for placing trained individuals with intellectual disabilities into fulfilling jobs using existing or improved training programs.

(c) Requires HHSC, not later than December 1, 2018, to report the results of the study to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the appropriate standing committees of the senate and the house of representatives.

(d) Provides that this section expires September 1, 2019.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2017.