

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 260
By: Huffines
Veteran Affairs & Border Security
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In 1991, the Texas Legislature created the Office of Immigration and Refugee Affairs (OIRA), a division of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. OIRA assisted roughly 4,500 refugees a year in gaining economic independence and adjusting to American culture through several federally funded assistance programs. The three main programs were temporary cash assistance, medical assistance for refugees who have lived in the United States for eight months or less, and social services for those who are eligible and have lived in the United States five years or less. Actual resettlement of refugees was not handled by the state but by local voluntary resettlement agencies (VOLAGs), such as Catholic Charities.

After negotiations between the state and federal government over security assurances and maintaining current resettlement numbers failed, Governor Abbott notified the federal government, on September 30, 2016, that Texas would withdraw from the Federal Refugee Resettlement Program. Per federal requirements, this notice had to be given 120 days before formal withdrawal, so Texas left the program on January 30, 2017.

S.B. 260 codifies the decision made by Governor Abbott and Texas' withdrawal from the Federal Refugee Resettlement Program.

As proposed, S.B. 260 amends current law relating to the abolishment of the Office of Immigration and Refugee Affairs and the Governor's Advisory Committee on Immigration and Refugees.

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. Repealer: Chapter 752 (Immigration), Government Code.

SECTION 2. Provides that the Office of Immigration and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) and the Governor's Advisory Committee on Immigration and Refugees are abolished. Provides that on the effective date of this Act:

- (1) all money other than federal money of OIRA is transferred to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC);
- (2) all contracts, leases, rights, obligations, and personal property, including records, in the custody of OIRA, other than certain federal documents and items, are transferred to HHSC; and
- (3) all remaining federal money, contracts, leases, rights, obligations, and personal property are transferred as directed by the director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2017.