

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 677
By: Miles
Criminal Justice
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The purpose of S.B. 677 is for the Windham School District and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to put together a task force which assesses the daily activities of inmates in order to determine what type of certificates, industry-recognized credentials, high school, college or joint high school and college credit can be awarded to inmates. The task force will also determine the actions necessary for obtaining the award of the applicable academic credit or industry recognition in the hopes of reducing recidivism and saving money.

As proposed, S.B. 677 amends current law 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, 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 in which persons confined or imprisoned in TDCJ engage.

(b) Establishes 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 a vacancy on the task force to 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 a member to reimbursement for actual and necessary 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 persons confined or imprisoned in TDCJ engage, and to identify opportunities for the award of high school credit,

college credit, or joint high school and college credit, or the award of an industry-recognized credential or certificate, 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), for any type of work or productive activity for which an opportunity is identified, to determine the actions necessary for obtaining the award of the applicable academic credit or industry recognition.

(j) Requires the task force to, not less than once every four years, submit to certain legislative individuals and entities having jurisdiction over TDCJ a report that summarizes the conducted review and the district's actions with regard to obtaining the award of academic credit or industry recognition. Requires the district to provide the task force with any information necessary to complete the report.

(k) Provides that Chapter 2110 (State Agency Advisory Committees), Government Code, does not apply to the established task force.

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

SECTION 2. Requires the executive director of TDCJ, the superintendent of the district, the commissioner of higher education, the executive director of TWC, and the governor, not later than December 1, 2017, to appoint members to the task force established by Section 19.012, Education Code, as added by this Act, in the manner required by Subsection (b) of that section.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2017.