

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
86R20257 AAF-F

H.B. 3616
By: Hunter; Guillen (Lucio)
Water & Rural Affairs
5/14/2019
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, faith-based organizations participate during the response and recovery process in all types of natural disasters. However, statewide emergency systems lack a coordinated effort with faith-based organizations, which creates a gap during and after natural disasters. Furthermore, faith-based organizations contribute a considerable amount of money and resources that could be better leveraged to target those in need of specific services. The state will persistently struggle to coordinate supplies and services during and after natural disasters without integrating faith-based organizations.

H.B. 3616 proposes the creation of a faith-based organization task force to help the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) identify the best practices to coordinate state resources. The task force, comprised of representatives from faith-based organizations, would help TDEM improve its data collection on the existing services offered by organizations. Additionally, the task force would help to develop and improve the communications network between the state and the organizations as well as identify and eliminate waste during the disaster response phase. Lastly, the task force would submit a report to the legislature outlining the recommendations of the task force. By establishing a task force to develop better coordination with faith-based organizations, the state can help ensure a more effective reaction to natural disasters.

H.B. 3616 amends current law relating to the establishment of a task force on faith-based programs that provide assistance during a disaster.

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 418, Government Code, by adding Subchapter I, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER I. TASK FORCE ON FAITH-BASED DISASTER RESPONSE

Sec. 418.251. DEFINITIONS. Defines "chief" as the chief of the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) and defines "task force" as the task force on faith-based disaster response established under this subchapter (task force) for purposes of this subchapter.

Sec. 418.252. ESTABLISHMENT. Provides that the task force is established to assist TDEM by studying the participation of faith-based organizations in disaster response.

Sec. 418.253. MEMBERSHIP. (a) Provides that the task force is composed of representatives of faith-based organizations active in disaster response appointed by the chief.

(b) Requires the chief to determine the number of members of the task force to ensure effective representation of faith-based organizations active in disaster response.

Sec. 418.254. OFFICERS. (a) Provides that the chief is designated as the interim presiding officer for purposes of calling and conducting the initial meeting of the task force.

(b) Provides that the task force:

(1) is required to at its initial meeting select a presiding officer from among its members for the purpose of calling and conducting meetings; and

(2) is authorized to select an assistant presiding officer and secretary from among its members.

Sec. 418.255. COMPENSATION; REIMBURSEMENT. Provides that a member of the task force is not entitled to compensation or reimbursement of expenses for service on the task force.

Sec. 418.256. MEETINGS. (a) Requires the task force, after its initial meeting, to meet at least twice each year at a time and place determined by the presiding officer.

(b) Authorizes the task force to meet at other times the task force considers appropriate. Authorizes the presiding officer to call a meeting on the officer's own motion.

(c) Authorizes the task force to meet by teleconference.

Sec. 418.257. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT. Requires TDEM to provide administrative support to the task force.

Sec. 418.258. DUTIES OF TASK FORCE. (a) Requires the task force to:

(1) develop and implement a plan for improving data collection regarding faith-based organizations that participate in disaster response;

(2) develop best practices for communicating, cooperating, and collaborating with faith-based organizations to strengthen disaster response in this state;

(3) identify and address inefficiencies in disaster response provided by the state and faith-based organizations; and

(4) identify and address gaps in state services that could be provided by faith-based organizations.

Sec. 418.259. REPORT. Requires the task force, not later than December 1, 2020, to submit to the governor and the legislature a report of the task force's activities conducted under Section 418.258 and any recommendations for legislative or other action.

Sec. 418.260. GIFTS AND GRANTS. Authorizes the task force to solicit and accept gifts and grants from any source to be used to carry out a function of the task force.

Sec. 418.261. EXPIRATION. Provides that the task force is abolished and this subchapter expires September 1, 2021.

SECTION 2. Requires the chief, not later than October 1, 2019, to appoint members to the task force, as required by Section 418.253, Government Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2019.