

Training for public schools on preventing sexual abuse and trafficking

HB 1342 by Parker (Hughes)

DIGEST:	<p>HB 1342 would have specified requirements for school district child abuse anti-victimization programs in elementary and secondary schools. The programs would have been required to include annual age-appropriate, research-based child sexual abuse prevention training designed to promote self-protection. Districts would have been required each year to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• include a description of the training in an informational handbook provided to students, parents, and guardians or on the district's website;• ensure that each student attended the training; and• provide at least two opportunities for a student to attend.
GOVERNOR'S REASON FOR VETO:	<p>"I have signed Senate Bill 2039, which directs the Texas Education Agency to develop an optional curriculum regarding sexual abuse prevention for use by school districts. While both Senate Bill 2039 and House Bill 1342 seek to achieve a good purpose, Senate Bill 2039 does so in a more suitable way. By recognizing both the importance of this topic and the right of parents to opt their children out of the instruction, Senate Bill 2039 strikes the correct balance. House Bill 1342 was well-intentioned, but it lacked a provision for parental opt-out. This is inconsistent with the longstanding rule in Texas schools that parents can remove their child from 'any part of the district's human sexuality instruction.' TEX. EDUC. CODE §28.004(i)."</p>
RESPONSE:	<p>Rep. Tan Parker, the bill's author, said: "As lawmakers approached the 85th legislative session, protecting children was rightfully a legislative topic that was at the forefront of our priorities as a state. In that spirit, and as my legislative record reflects, I worked to build upon previous accomplishments related to the prevention of child sexual abuse. After much research and work with industry experts as well as victims, I filed HB 1342 as a self-protection training measure for school children.</p> <p>"Unlike sex education, HB 1342 provides for age appropriate anti-victimization training so that children can identify what is sexual abuse and how to stop it. Despite this being an abuse prevention bill, it was still carefully crafted to weigh the importance of parental notification, which I have fully supported when students are exposed to child protection measures.</p> <p>"As HB 1342 advanced through the legislative process, industry experts testified to the well documented fact that over 90 percent of child sexual abuse is committed by a family member or someone the child knows. Therefore, providing a direct parental opt-out would have undermined the intent of this bill and created a dangerous</p>

loophole for abusive adults. Instead, HB 1342 included a requirement that a full description of the course be listed in the school district's parent-student handbook or online, should the school district not provide a handbook. These two options would have allowed parents to have the ability to learn more about the training. The added measure for disclosure and awareness that this training would be provided was an appropriate component of this child safety bill.

"I believe that HB 1342 was unfortunately confused with sex education legislation and not understood, as it was intended to solely provide self-defense training for the most vulnerable in our society."

Sen. Bryan Hughes, the Senate sponsor, had no comment on the veto.

NOTES: HB 1342 was not analyzed in a *Daily Floor Report*.