

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 3555  
By: Swanson  
Human Services  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Interested parties contend that the foster care system in Texas often leaves the needs of abused or neglected children unaddressed while failing to adequately use the services and efforts of faith-based community programs. C.S.H.B. 3555 seeks to address this issue by providing for an innovation grant program under which grants are awarded to faith-based community programs that collaborate with the state to improve foster care and the placement of children in foster care.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the governor in SECTION 1 of this bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 3555 amends the Family Code to require the governor, using available funds or private donations, to establish and administer an innovation grant program to award grants to support faith-based community programs that collaborate with the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to improve foster care and the placement of children in foster care. The bill makes a faith-based community program eligible for such a grant if the effectiveness of the program is supported by empirical evidence and the program has demonstrated the ability to build connections between faith-based, secular, and government stakeholders. The bill requires the regional director for DFPS in the region where a faith-based grant recipient program is located, or the regional director's designee, to serve as the liaison between DFPS and the program for collaborative purposes. The bill authorizes DFPS, for a faith-based grant recipient program that operates in a larger region, to designate a liaison in each county where the program is operating. The bill prohibits DFPS or HHSC from directing or managing the operation of a faith-based grant recipient program. The bill establishes that the initial duration of a grant awarded under the innovation grant program is two years and authorizes the governor to renew a grant awarded to a faith-based grant recipient program if funds are available and the governor determines that the program is successful. The bill caps the amount of a grant the governor may award to a faith-based community program under the innovation grant program at \$300,000. The bill requires the governor to adopt rules to implement the innovation grant program. The bill requires the governor as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date to adopt rules for the implementation and administration of the innovation grant program and to begin awarding grants under the program.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2017.

## COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 3555 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following comparison is organized and formatted in a manner that indicates the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

### INTRODUCED

SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 264, Family Code, is amended by adding Section 264.2042 to read as follows:

Sec. 264.2042. GRANTS FOR FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY

COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS. (a) Subject to the availability of funds, the department shall establish and administer an innovation grant program, administered by the governor, to award grants to support faith-based community programs that collaborate with the department and the commission to improve foster care and the placement of children in foster care.

(b) A faith-based community program is eligible for a grant under this section if:

(1) the effectiveness of the program is supported by empirical evidence; and

(2) the program has demonstrated the ability to build connections between faith-based, secular, and government stakeholders.

(c) The regional director for the department in the region where a grant recipient program is located, or the regional director's designee, shall serve as the liaison between the department and the program for collaborative purposes. For a program that operates in a larger region, the department may designate a liaison in each county where the program is operating. The department or the commission may not direct or manage the operation of the program.

(d) The initial duration of a grant under this section is two years. The department may renew a grant awarded to a program under this section if the department determines that the program is successful.

(e) The department may not award to a program grants under this section totaling more than \$300,000.

(f) The department and the governor shall adopt rules to implement the grant program created under this section.

### HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 264, Family Code, is amended by adding Section 264.2042 to read as follows:

Sec. 264.2042. GRANTS FOR FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY

COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS. (a) Using available funds or private donations, the governor shall establish and administer an innovation grant program to award grants to support faith-based community programs that collaborate with the department and the commission to improve foster care and the placement of children in foster care.

(b) A faith-based community program is eligible for a grant under this section if:

(1) the effectiveness of the program is supported by empirical evidence; and

(2) the program has demonstrated the ability to build connections between faith-based, secular, and government stakeholders.

(c) The regional director for the department in the region where a grant recipient program is located, or the regional director's designee, shall serve as the liaison between the department and the program for collaborative purposes. For a program that operates in a larger region, the department may designate a liaison in each county where the program is operating. The department or the commission may not direct or manage the operation of the program.

(d) The initial duration of a grant under this section is two years. The governor may renew a grant awarded to a program under this section if funds are available and the governor determines that the program is successful.

(e) The governor may not award to a program grants under this section totaling more than \$300,000.

(f) The governor shall adopt rules to implement the grant program created under this section.

SECTION 2. As soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, the governor and the Department of Family and Protective Services shall adopt rules for the implementation and administration of the innovation grant program established under Section 264.2042, Family Code, as added by this Act, and begin to award grants under the program.

SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017.

SECTION 2. As soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, the governor shall adopt rules for the implementation and administration of the innovation grant program established under Section 264.2042, Family Code, as added by this Act, and begin to award grants under the program.

SECTION 3. Same as introduced version.