

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.S.B. 677
By: Miles
Corrections
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties contend that formerly incarcerated individuals face barriers to obtaining employment on release because many do not have a traditional resume or work history. C.S.S.B. 677 seeks to address this issue by creating a task force to identify opportunities for these individuals to demonstrate their skills to prospective employers.

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 this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.S.B. 677 amends the Education Code to require the Windham School 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. The bill sets out the composition of the task force, requires the governor to designate a task force member to serve as presiding officer, and requires a vacancy on the task force to be filled in the same manner as the initial appointment. The bill prohibits a task force member 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. The bill authorizes the task force to accept gifts and grants from any source to be used to carry out a function of the task force and requires the task force to meet at the call of the presiding officer.

C.S.S.B. 677 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. The bill requires the Windham School District, in consultation with TDCJ, the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), to determine, for any type of work or productive activity for which an opportunity is so identified, the actions necessary for obtaining the award of the applicable academic credit or industry recognition. The bill requires the task force to submit not later than September 1, 2021, to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the standing committees of the legislature having jurisdiction over TDCJ a report that summarizes the review conducted by the task force and the district's actions with regard to obtaining the award of academic credit or industry recognition and requires the district to provide the task force with any information necessary to complete the report. The bill's

provisions expire December 1, 2021.

C.S.S.B. 677 requires the executive director of TDCJ, the superintendent of the Windham School District, the commissioner of higher education, the executive director of the TWC, and the governor to appoint members to the task force in the manner required by the bill's provisions not later than December 1, 2017.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2017.

COMPARISON OF SENATE ENGROSSED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.S.B. 677 may differ from the engrossed in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following comparison is organized and formatted in a manner that indicates the substantial differences between the engrossed and committee substitute versions of the bill.

SENATE ENGROSSED

SECTION 1. Chapter 19, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 19.012 to read as follows:

Sec. 19.012. TASK FORCE ON ACADEMIC CREDIT AND INDUSTRY RECOGNITION. (a) The Windham School District, in consultation with the department, shall establish a task force to review the work or other productive activities in which persons confined or imprisoned in the department engage.

(b) The task force is composed of the following eight members:

(1) two representatives of the department designated by the executive director of the department;

(2) one representative of the district designated by the superintendent of the district;

(3) one representative of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board designated by the commissioner of higher education;

(4) one representative of the Texas Workforce Commission designated by the executive director of the commission;

(5) one representative of a private vendor operating a correctional facility under a contract with the department, appointed by the governor;

(6) one representative of a public junior college, as defined by Section 61.003, appointed by the governor; and

HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

SECTION 1. Chapter 19, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 19.012 to read as follows:

Sec. 19.012. TASK FORCE ON ACADEMIC CREDIT AND INDUSTRY RECOGNITION. (a) The Windham School District, in consultation with the department, shall establish a task force to review the work or other productive activities in which persons confined or imprisoned in the department engage.

(b) The task force is composed of the following 10 members:

(1) two representatives of the department designated by the executive director of the department;

(2) one representative of the district designated by the superintendent of the district;

(3) one representative of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board designated by the commissioner of higher education;

(4) one representative of the Texas Workforce Commission designated by the executive director of the commission;

(5) one representative of a private vendor operating a correctional facility under a contract with the department, appointed by the governor;

(6) three representatives of public junior colleges, as defined by Section 61.003, appointed by the governor, including:

(A) at least one representative of a public junior college that provides education services to persons confined or imprisoned in the department; and

(7) one representative of a faith-based organization, appointed by the governor.

(c) The governor shall designate a member of the task force to serve as presiding officer.

(d) A vacancy on the task force shall be filled in the same manner as the initial appointment.

(e) The task force may accept gifts and grants from any source to be used to carry out a function of the task force.

(f) The task force shall meet at least quarterly at the call of the presiding officer and at other times as determined by the presiding officer.

(g) The task force shall:

(1) conduct an ongoing comprehensive review of the work or other productive activities in which persons confined or imprisoned in the department engage; and

(2) 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.

(h) The district, in consultation with the department, the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Texas Workforce Commission, shall for any type of work or productive activity for which an opportunity is identified under Subsection (g), determine the actions necessary for obtaining the award of the applicable academic credit or industry recognition.

(i) Not less than once every four years, the task force shall submit to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the standing committees of the legislature having jurisdiction over the department a report that summarizes the review conducted under Subsection (g) and the district's actions with regard to obtaining the award of academic credit or industry recognition under Subsection (h). The district shall provide

(B) at least one representative of a public junior college that does not provide services described by Paragraph (A); and

(7) one representative of a faith-based organization, appointed by the governor.

(c) The governor shall designate a member of the task force to serve as presiding officer.

(d) A vacancy on the task force shall be filled in the same manner as the initial appointment.

(e) A member of the task force may not receive compensation for service on the task force but is entitled to reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred in performing task force duties.

(f) The task force may accept gifts and grants from any source to be used to carry out a function of the task force.

(g) The task force shall meet at the call of the presiding officer.

(h) The task force shall:

(1) conduct an ongoing comprehensive review of the work or other productive activities in which persons confined or imprisoned in the department engage; and

(2) 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) The district, in consultation with the department, the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Texas Workforce Commission, shall, for any type of work or productive activity for which an opportunity is identified under Subsection (h), determine the actions necessary for obtaining the award of the applicable academic credit or industry recognition.

(j) Not later than September 1, 2021, the task force shall submit to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the standing committees of the legislature having jurisdiction over the department a report that summarizes the review conducted under Subsection (h) and the district's actions with regard to obtaining the award of academic credit or industry recognition under Subsection (i). The district shall provide the

the task force with any information necessary to complete the report.

(j) Chapter 2110, Government Code, does not apply to the task force established under this section.

(k) The task force shall submit the first report required under Subsection (i) not later than December 31, 2020. This subsection expires February 1, 2021.

SECTION 2. Not later than December 1, 2017, the executive director of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the superintendent of the Windham School District, the commissioner of higher education, the executive director of the Texas Workforce Commission, and the governor shall 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. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017.

task force with any information necessary to complete the report.

(k) This section expires December 1, 2021.

SECTION 2. Same as engrossed version.

SECTION 3. Same as engrossed version.