

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 700
By: Johnson, Jarvis
Human Services
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

State law provides a tuition and fee waiver for foster youth currently or formerly in Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) conservatorship and those adopted from DFPS so that they can attend a state-supported college or university at no cost to themselves. However, only a fraction of those eligible for this waiver program actually take advantage of the program and enroll in college. H.B. 700 seeks to close this gap and ensure these youth have the opportunity to begin using the waiver and obtaining college credits while still in DFPS care by requiring the development of a plan to ensure the eligibility of foster children to receive college credit for completing the Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program.

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

H.B. 700 amends the Family Code to require the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), in coordination with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, to establish a work group to develop a plan to ensure that foster youth who complete the standardized curriculum for the Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program are eligible to receive college credit for completing the program. The work group must include representatives from urban and rural public institutions of higher education.

H.B. 700 requires the work group, in developing its evidence-based recommendations, to consider the feasibility of implementing each recommendation, a foster youth's access to the PAL program, and the average length of time a foster youth will remain in a placement. The bill requires DFPS to report the plan to the legislature not later than November 1, 2022. The bill's provisions expire September 1, 2023.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.