

SUBJECT: Allowing Border Health Foundation programs on Mexican side of border

COMMITTEE: Border and International Affairs —favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 5 ayes — Chavez, Griggs, Alonzo, Castro, Vo

0 nays

1 absent — Merritt

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, May 17 — 31-0, on Local and Uncontested Calendar.

WITNESSES: None

BACKGROUND: The Department of State Health Services' Office of Border Health (OBH) was created in 1993 to enhance agency efforts to promote and protect the health of border residents by reducing community and environmental hazards along the Texas-Mexico border, in collaboration with communities and U.S. and Mexican local, state, and federal entities.

In 2003, the Border Health Foundation was created by the 78th Legislature with enactment of HB 2450 by Chavez. The foundation is a nonprofit corporation serving to raise money from other foundations, governmental agencies, and other sources to finance health programs in the state in areas adjacent to the border with Mexico. The foundation emphasizes health initiatives in both rural and urban Texas communities along the Texas-Mexico border. It is governed by a five-member board of directors serving staggered, six-year terms. The board is appointed by the Texas Board of Health from individuals recommended by the commissioner.

Through the foundation, OBH receives federal funding and private donations to provide additional support to improve health conditions along the Texas side of the border.

DIGEST: SB 1737 would authorize the Border Health Foundation to raise money to finance health programs in areas of Mexico adjacent to the border. The foundation could engage in outreach efforts to reach potential partners in Mexico to help finance the programs. The board of directors of the

foundation would be appointed by a vote of the board from individuals recommended by the Department of State Health Services.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2005.

NOTES:

According to the fiscal note, the Department of State Health Services estimates no state fiscal impact from SB 1737.