

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1928
By: Seliger
Veteran Affairs & Military Installations-S/C Border Security
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) offers refugee resettlement services to help refugee families attain economic independence and cultural adjustment after their arrival in the United States. Refugees are individuals who live outside their country of origin and cannot return to their home due to fear of persecution based on race, religion, ethnic group, or membership in a social or political group.

The resettlement of refugees in the local communities is coordinated by local voluntary resettlement agencies (VOLAGs). These entities work with national VOLAGs, the United States Department of State, and HHSC to determine the best place for these refugees to be resettled. A well-organized, systematic plan of engagement between local VOLAGs and stakeholders (i.e., school districts, local hospital districts, law enforcement, major employers, etc.) is vital to the assurance of available resources within communities in which these refugees are placed.

S.B. 1928 gives rulemaking authority to HHSC in order to allow public participation and local input into the rules developed around the placement of refugees.

As proposed, S.B. 1928 amends current law relating to the rulemaking authority of the Health and Human Services Commission to provide for the placement of refugees in this state.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission in SECTION 1 (Section 531.041, Government Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 531.041, Government Code, as follows:

Sec. 531.041. GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES. (a) Creates this subsection from existing text. Provides that the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) has all the powers and duties necessary to administer this chapter.

(b) Requires the executive commissioner of HHSC (executive commissioner) to adopt rules for gathering and considering community input on the local refugee distribution reporting requirements for the United States Refugee Resettlement Program as administered by this state.

SECTION 2. Requires the executive commissioner to adopt the rules as provided by Section 531.041(b), Government Code, as added by this Act, not later than May 1, 2016.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2015.