

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
88R6106 AMF-F

S.B. 1841  
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As Filed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Chapter 51 of the Human Resources Code, which outlines the required services for family violence centers statewide, has not been updated in over twenty years and has no required service model. Although family violence centers adhere to federal requirements, such as the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act, research shows that efficacy increases when services are offered in a framework that is voluntary and trauma-informed. Further, it is critical that Chapter 51 be adapted to include several areas of advocacy commonly cited as necessary to support survivors.

S.B. 1841 aligns Chapter 51 with services that many family violence centers and survivors cite as needed. It provides for the inclusion of advocacy services focused on children, economics and housing, criminal and civil legal systems, and physical and mental health. Additionally, S.B. 1841 proposes four required services to represent survivors' needs more accurately:

- Safety planning – With over 50 percent of survivors reporting an increased sense of safety after using services, clarifying the importance of this service is needed.
- Counseling services to support survivors and their families as they heal from violence.
- Peer support services, which include activities and efforts led by survivors of family violence that support and facilitate connection with other survivors.
- Prevention efforts to raise awareness about family violence and promote healthy relationships aimed at ending family violence in communities.

As proposed, S.B. 1841 amends current law relating to family violence center services for victims of family violence.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

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

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Section 51.002, Human Resources Code, by amending Subdivisions (1), (2), and (9) and adding Subdivisions (1-a), (1-b), and (1-c) to define "culturally relevant," "dating relationship," and "dating violence" and to redefine "family," "family violence," and "victim of family violence."

SECTION 2. Amends Sections 51.004(a) and (b), Human Resources Code, as follows:

(a) Requires a family violence shelter center, to be eligible for a contract under Section 51.003(a) (relating to requiring the Health and Human Services Commission to contract for services with family violence centers with consideration given to the plan for family violence services), to meet certain criteria, including demonstrating that the center is using a culturally relevant and trauma-informed advocacy service model. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

(b) Requires a family violence nonresidential center, to be eligible for a contract under Section 51.003(a), to meet certain criteria, including demonstrating that the center is

using a culturally relevant and trauma-informed advocacy service model. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 51.005, Human Resources Code, by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (b-1), as follows:

(b) Requires that the contracts require the persons operating a family violence center to:

(1)-(2) makes no changes to these subdivisions;

(3) provide, as its primary purpose, culturally relevant and trauma-informed services to victims of family violence that include:

(A)-(B) makes no changes to these paragraphs;

(C) intervention services, including understanding and support, information, education, referrals, advocacy, and other resource assistance for:

(i) economic and housing stability;

(ii) obtaining treatment for physical, behavioral, and mental health;

(iii) the needs of children who are victims and the children of victims; and

(iv) participating in the civil and criminal justice systems;

(D) safety planning services in collaboration with the self-stated priorities and needs of the victim of family violence;

(E) community education regarding family violence and family violence prevention efforts;

(F) counseling services; and

(G) peer support services that facilitate connections between victims to create community.

Deletes existing text requiring that the contracts require the persons operating a family violence center to provide, as its primary purpose, services to victims of family violence that include access to emergency medical care; intervention services, including safety planning; access to emergency transportation; legal assistance in the civil and criminal justice systems; information about educational arrangements for children; information about training for and seeking employment; cooperation with criminal justice officials; community education; a referral system to existing community services; and a volunteer recruitment and training program.

(b-1) Requires that the contracts prohibit the persons operating a family violence center from requiring a victim of family violence to participate in other services as a condition of receiving shelter.

SECTION 4. Makes application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 5. Effective date: September 1, 2023.