

Creating the Commission on Texas Workforce of the Future

HB 3511 by VanDeaver (Alvarado)

Digest

HB 3511 would have established the Commission on Texas Workforce of the Future to engage businesses, state agencies, and local workforce system partners in state and local efforts to build the state's workforce talent pipeline. The commission's board would have had 17 members who were state officials or were appointed by state officials. The commission would have been required to make recommendations on issues related to workforce development and the future of the state's workforce and to deliver a report with these recommendations to the governor and Legislature by December 31, 2020.

Governor's reason for veto

"House Bill 3511 is redundant of the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative, which is comprised of the Texas Workforce Commission, the Texas Education Agency, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Since 2016, those three agencies have worked to assess local economic activity, examine workforce challenges and opportunities, and consider innovative approaches to meeting the State's workforce goals. Together, they are implementing reforms that will improve the quality of education and the workforce in Texas. We need to give those changes a chance to succeed before we start adding bureaucracy and duplicating effort through creation of an expansive new commission."

Response

Rep. Gary VanDeaver, the bill's author, said: "I respectfully disagree with the governor in his decision to veto HB 3511. With the accelerating pace of change in the economy of Texas, it is essential for the state to align its changing workforce and education institutions by engaging business leaders in identifying industry specific skills that are required to access quality jobs and build a globally competitive workforce pipeline. HB 3511

delivered two key components that have been void from Gov. Abbott's Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative — industry leaders and state legislators. We cannot begin to address the current and future skills gap across the state if we do not first identify what skills are needed.

"When looking at the Tri-Agency efforts of the Texas Workforce Commission, Texas Education Agency, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, although well intentioned, the agencies failed to bring industry leaders to the table. If business leaders in the state's five major industries had participated in the conversation, this commission could have identified changes to benefit the development of the talent pipeline and help address industry needs more immediately. The commission could have included top industry leaders who would help identify what skills are needed and the limitations that the current workforce pipeline has in filling that gap. By failing to do so, the Tri-Agency efforts have been seemingly ineffective.

"HB 3511 would have established a commission to improve upon the Tri-Agency efforts in workforce development. The commission established in HB 3511 would also have included legislators, another important component the Tri-Agency lacked. Legislators would have been charged with helping identify current regulations that prohibit our state agencies, public education and higher education institutions from being flexible when it comes to the changing dynamics of the 21st century workforce.

"The governor's most recent charge to the Tri-Agency commission was post-Hurricane Harvey and directed it to develop an education and workforce training plan in response to the hurricane's impact on the workforce. In 2017, the governor issued charges for the agency to 'implement strategies to quickly put Texans back to work' and 'work with local workforce development boards, secondary and postsecondary institutions and other stakeholders to develop and implement strategies to upskill the Texas workforce and rebuild our local communities.' The ambiguity of these charges make it difficult to

determine the effectiveness of the commission, especially considering neither new regulatory or statutory changes came from the charges.

“The Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative established the Texas Industry Cluster Innovative Academies. A one-time grant of \$7.2 million was made available for the Industry Cluster Innovative Academies to develop program models that can be replicated or scaled across other campuses or different regions of the state; however, the Innovative Academies are only in 18 schools across the state. Although the Tri-Agency established the Industry Cluster Innovative Academy in 2017, a grant has not been awarded since that year.

“Besides the establishment of the Industry Cluster Innovative Academies, the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative has not determined current regulations that hinder state agencies, public and higher education institutions from adapting to the changing workforce needs of the Texas economy, nor has the Tri-Agency proposed new statutory or regulatory changes to enhance workforce development, coordination or alignment between industry, public education, and higher education.

“It was the intent of the HB 3511-established commission to identify statutory changes for the 87th Legislature to act upon that would benefit the development of the education and workforce talent pipeline to help address industry needs more immediately. I hope with the governor’s veto of HB 3511, he is sincere in his efforts to re-engage the work of the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative with the intent of having our state’s industry and legislative leaders at the table. If this is the case, I pledge to do all that I can to help with this effort. The future of Texas’ economy is depending on it.”

Sen. Carol Alvarado, the Senate sponsor, could not be reached for comment on the veto.

Notes

The HRO analysis of [HB 3511](#) appeared in Part Four of the *May 7 Daily Floor Report*.
