

1-1 By: Hull (Senate Sponsor - Zaffirini) H.B. No. 474
1-2 (In the Senate - Received from the House April 24, 2023;
1-3 April 25, 2023, read first time and referred to Committee on Health
1-4 & Human Services; May 8, 2023, reported favorably by the following
1-5 vote: Yeas 8, Nays 0; May 8, 2023, sent to printer.)

1-6 COMMITTEE VOTE

	Yea	Nay	Absent	PNV
1-7				
1-8	X			
1-9	X			
1-10	X			
1-11	X			
1-12	X			
1-13			X	
1-14	X			
1-15	X			
1-16	X			

1-17 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
1-18 AN ACT

1-19 relating to certain requirements regarding court-appointed
1-20 volunteer advocate programs.

1-21 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

1-22 SECTION 1. Section 264.601, Family Code, is amended by
1-23 adding Subdivisions (1-a) and (1-b) to read as follows:

1-24 (1-a) "Active volunteer advocate" means an individual
1-25 who:

1-26 (A) has been trained by a volunteer advocate
1-27 program in accordance with recognized standards for volunteer
1-28 advocate programs; and

1-29 (B) is currently serving as a volunteer advocate
1-30 on at least one child's case.

1-31 (1-b) "Inactive volunteer advocate" means an
1-32 individual who:

1-33 (A) has been trained by a volunteer advocate
1-34 program in accordance with recognized standards for volunteer
1-35 advocate programs; and

1-36 (B) is not currently serving as a volunteer
1-37 advocate.

1-38 SECTION 2. Section 264.603(a), Family Code, is amended to
1-39 read as follows:

1-40 (a) The commission shall contract with one statewide
1-41 organization that is exempt from federal income taxation under
1-42 Section 501(a), Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as an organization
1-43 described by Section 501(c)(3) of that code and that is composed of
1-44 individuals or groups of individuals who have expertise in the
1-45 dynamics of child abuse and neglect and experience in operating
1-46 volunteer advocate programs to provide training, technical
1-47 assistance, and evaluation services for the benefit of local
1-48 volunteer advocate programs. The contract shall:

1-49 (1) include measurable goals and objectives relating
1-50 to the number of:

1-51 (A) active volunteer advocates in the program;

1-52 [~~and~~]

1-53 (B) inactive volunteer advocates in the program;

1-54 and

1-55 (C) children receiving services from the
1-56 program; and

1-57 (2) follow practices designed to ensure compliance
1-58 with standards referenced in the contract.

1-59 SECTION 3. Section 264.604(a), Family Code, is amended to
1-60 read as follows:

1-61 (a) A person is eligible for a contract under Section

2-1 264.602 only if the person is a public or private nonprofit entity
2-2 that operates a volunteer advocate program that:

2-3 (1) uses individuals appointed as volunteer advocates
2-4 or guardians ad litem by the court to provide for the needs of
2-5 abused or neglected children;

2-6 (2) has provided court-appointed advocacy services
2-7 for at least six months;

2-8 (3) provides court-appointed advocacy services for at
2-9 least 10 children each month; ~~and~~

2-10 (4) has demonstrated that the program has local
2-11 judicial support;

2-12 (5) has adopted a grievance procedure to address
2-13 complaints regarding negligence or misconduct related to a
2-14 volunteer advocate's duties under Section 107.002; and

2-15 (6) maintains accurate records regarding active
2-16 volunteer advocates and inactive volunteer advocates under the
2-17 program.

2-18 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.

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