

By: Schatzline

H.B. No. 4965

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to measures to promote and support responsible fatherhood  
in this state.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subchapter 7, Chapter 29, Education Code, is  
amended by adding Section 29.9011 to read as follows:

Sec. 29.9011. JUNIOR RESERVE OFFICERS' TRAINING CORPS GRANT  
PROGRAM. (a) The commissioner shall establish a pilot program  
under which a public secondary school may receive a grant to create,  
promote, or expand a Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps  
program.

(b) A public secondary school is eligible to participate in  
and receive a grant under eligibility criteria established by the  
commissioner.

(c) The commissioner shall establish application criteria  
for receiving a grant under this section.

(d) A public secondary school that receives a grant shall  
use the funds to create, promote, or expand a Junior Reserve  
Officers' Training Corps program at the school.

(e) The commissioner shall adopt rules necessary to  
administer the pilot program under this section.

(f) After five years, the commissioner shall submit a report  
to the governor and the legislature that includes:

(1) an assessment on the effectiveness of the pilot

1 program at increasing high school graduation rates; and

2 (2) a recommendation regarding whether the pilot  
3 program should be continued, expanded, or terminated.

4 (g) This section expires September 1, 2029.

5 SECTION 2. Section 231.1211, Family Code, is amended to  
6 read as follows:

7 Sec. 231.1211. INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS ON STANDARD  
8 POSSESSION ORDER AND CHILD SUPPORT OBLIGOR RESOURCES. (a) The  
9 Title IV-D agency shall create informational materials that  
10 describe:

11 (1) the possession schedule under the standard  
12 possession order under Subchapter F, Chapter 153, including any  
13 alternate schedules or elections available to conservators; and

14 (2) resources available to assist child support  
15 obligors experiencing difficulty with meeting their child support  
16 obligations, including information:

17 (A) describing career or financial assistance  
18 programs and services available to support unemployed or  
19 underemployed child support obligors;

20 (B) explaining how to access those programs and  
21 services; and

22 (C) detailing the process by which a child  
23 support obligor may seek to modify the obligor's child support  
24 obligation.

25 (b) The Title IV-D agency shall:

26 (1) make the informational materials described by  
27 Subsection (a) available on the agency's Internet website and

1 distribute printed copies of those materials on request; and  
2 (2) include information on how to access the  
3 informational materials described by Subsection (a)(2) in any  
4 notice given by the Title IV-D agency to a child support obligor who  
5 is delinquent in the payment of child support.

6 SECTION 3. Subchapter B-1, Chapter 264, Family Code, is  
7 amended by adding Section 264.1621 to read as follows:

8 Sec. 264.1621. FATHERHOOD ENGAGEMENT REPORTS. (a) Not  
9 later than March 1, 2024, each single source continuum contractor  
10 or other entity that contracts with the department to provide  
11 community-based care services shall:

12 (1) evaluate the entity's level of engagement with  
13 fathers;

14 (2) identify any gaps in service related to engagement  
15 with fathers;

16 (3) identify viable solutions to resolve any gaps  
17 identified under Subdivision (2); and

18 (4) report to the department regarding the entity's  
19 findings under this subsection.

20 (b) Not later than September 1, 2024, the entity described  
21 by Subsection (a) shall implement solutions to address any gaps in  
22 service for fathers identified under Subsection (a)(2).

23 (c) The department shall:

24 (1) conduct a semiannual review of each entity  
25 described by Subsection (a) to assess the entity's:

26 (A) implementation of a plan to address gaps in  
27 service related to engagement with fathers; and

- 1                   (B) ability to meet the needs of fathers in this  
2 state;  
3                   (2) produce a report based on the department's review;  
4 and  
5                   (3) make the report available to the public not later  
6 than the 30th day after the date the department completes the  
7 report.

8           SECTION 4. Chapter 531, Government Code, is amended by  
9 adding Subchapter H-1 to read as follows:

10           SUBCHAPTER H-1. PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT FATHERS

11           Sec. 531.291. RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE. (a) In  
12 this section, "initiative" means the Responsible Fatherhood  
13 Initiative established under this section.

14           (b) The commission, after issuing a request for proposals  
15 and conducting a transparent selection process, shall contract with  
16 a nonprofit organization for the development and implementation of  
17 the Responsible Fatherhood Initiative. The initiative must provide  
18 an opportunity for every father in this state to obtain information  
19 and inspiration that will motivate and enable him to enhance his  
20 abilities as a father and recognize that some fathers have greater  
21 challenges than others and would benefit from greater support.

22           (c) The initiative must include:

23                   (1) an Internet website and other related electronic  
24 resources that will allow a father to:

25                           (A) obtain information about effective  
26 parenting;

27                           (B) identify areas in which support would enhance

1 the father's ability to be an effective father; and

2 (C) connect to the support identified under  
3 Paragraph (B), including support provided by an organization  
4 receiving a grant under Section 531.292;

5 (2) appropriate materials from the fatherhood media  
6 campaign available through the National Responsible Fatherhood  
7 Clearinghouse; and

8 (3) print, television, digital, and social media  
9 elements and public events, including appearances by and  
10 involvement from public figures.

11 (d) To contract with the commission under this section, a  
12 nonprofit organization must be nonpartisan and nonpolitical and  
13 have:

14 (1) a history of focusing on responsible fatherhood,  
15 including providing online resources to fathers and engaging  
16 fathers, father figures, and children through community-based and  
17 school-based events to encourage responsible fatherhood; and

18 (2) the organizational capacity to manage a statewide  
19 initiative and successfully carry out the requirements of this  
20 section.

21 (e) The nonprofit organization with which the commission  
22 contracts under this section shall collaborate with relevant state  
23 agencies and private organizations to develop and implement the  
24 initiative. The commission and other relevant state agencies shall  
25 provide support to the organization as necessary to carry out the  
26 initiative.

27 Sec. 531.292. GRANT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE CERTAIN SUPPORT TO

1 FATHERS. (a) To the extent money is appropriated to the commission  
2 for that purpose, the commission shall establish a program under  
3 which the commission awards grants to community-based nonprofit  
4 organizations to support fathers in this state by providing  
5 comprehensive support to fathers, including assistance with:

6 (1) finding employment;

7 (2) managing child support obligations;

8 (3) transitioning from a period of incarceration; and

9 (4) accessing health care.

10 (b) A community-based nonprofit organization that receives  
11 a grant under this section must provide:

12 (1) assistance that is tailored to the needs of the  
13 father being served; and

14 (2) case management services, either directly or by  
15 subcontract, to the father being served.

16 (c) A grant awarded under this section may be awarded to a  
17 community-based nonprofit organization for not more than three  
18 years.

19 (d) Not later than the third anniversary of the date the  
20 commission implements the grant program established under this  
21 section, the commission shall submit a report to the governor and  
22 the legislature regarding the results and performance of the grant  
23 program and any recommendations for legislative or other action,  
24 including whether to continue the program.

25 SECTION 5. Section 531.982, Government Code, is amended by  
26 adding Subsection (d) to read as follows:

27 (d) The commission shall implement fatherhood engagement

1 activities as part of a home visiting program implemented under  
2 this section. The activities may include increased and  
3 individualized support for fathers that is designed to strengthen  
4 the family and increase child well-being.

5 SECTION 6. Subchapter D, Chapter 662, Government Code, is  
6 amended by adding Section 662.116 to read as follows:

7 Sec. 662.116. RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD MONTH. (a) June is  
8 Responsible Fatherhood Month to honor a father's contribution to  
9 their child's well-being, safety, and stability.

10 (b) During Responsible Fatherhood Month, the Health and  
11 Human Services Commission shall at least weekly promote the  
12 importance of fatherhood for the health and welfare of a child  
13 through community engagement events, the news media, the  
14 commission's Internet website and social media platforms, and any  
15 other method the commission uses to communicate with the public.

16 (c) Responsible Fatherhood Month shall be regularly  
17 observed through appropriate activities in public locations to  
18 increase awareness of the importance and benefits of fatherhood.

19 SECTION 7. As soon as practicable after the effective date  
20 of this Act, the commissioner of education shall establish the  
21 grant program required under Section 29.9011, Education Code, as  
22 added by this Act.

23 SECTION 8. Not later than September 1, 2024:

24 (1) the executive commissioner of the Health and Human  
25 Services Commission shall adopt rules necessary to implement  
26 Section 531.292, Government Code, as added by this Act; and

27 (2) the commission shall establish and implement:

1                   (A) the Responsible Fatherhood Initiative  
2 required under Section 531.291, Government Code, as added by this  
3 Act; and

4                   (B) the grant program required under Section  
5 531.292, Government Code, as added by this Act.

6           SECTION 9. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.