

By: Reyna

H.B. No. 627

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to an area quarantine in response to a bioterrorist attack; imposing a criminal penalty.

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

SECTION 1. Subtitle D, Title 6, Health and Safety Code, is amended by adding Chapter 508 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 508. AREA QUARANTINE FOR HAZARDOUS

SUBSTANCES IN BIOTERRORIST ATTACK

Sec. 508.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Bioterrorist attack" means the reckless or intentional introduction into the environment of any bacterium or other disease-producing organism, toxic substance, radioactive substance, or other hazardous substance capable of causing widespread human illness, death, or negative economic impact.

(2) "Health authority" means a physician appointed as a health authority under Chapter 121.

Sec. 508.002. AREA QUARANTINE. If the commissioner of public health determines that a bioterrorist attack has occurred, the commissioner or one or more health authorities may impose an area quarantine in the manner and subject to the procedures and restrictions provided for an area quarantine imposed under Section 81.085. The commissioner of public health, the Texas Board of Health, or a health authority may, with respect to an area quarantine imposed under this chapter, exercise any power granted

1 under Section 81.085.

2 Sec. 508.003. CRIMINAL PENALTY. A person commits an offense  
3 if the person knowingly fails or refuses to obey a rule, order, or  
4 instruction of the Texas Board of Health or an order or instruction  
5 of a health authority issued under a board rule and published during  
6 an area quarantine under this section. An offense under this  
7 subsection is a felony of the third degree.

8 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
9 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
10 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
11 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
12 Act takes effect September 1, 2003.