

By: Chavez

H.B. No. 1651

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to creating the position of Native American liaison.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 405, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter D to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER D. NATIVE AMERICAN LIAISON

Sec. 405.151. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter, "liaison" means the Native American liaison.

Sec. 405.152. APPOINTMENT. (a) The governor shall appoint a liaison to serve within the office of the secretary of state. The individual appointed must meet the eligibility requirements of Section 405.153 and be selected from names submitted by the legislature, federally recognized Native American tribes, or other interested persons.

(b) The governor shall make every effort to appoint an individual of Native American descent as liaison.

Sec. 405.153. ELIGIBILITY FOR APPOINTMENT. To be eligible for appointment under Section 405.152, the individual must be:

(1) knowledgeable about the Native American tribes of this state and the opportunities and challenges facing the tribes; and

(2) experienced in working with Native Americans.

Sec. 405.154. TERM. The liaison serves at the will of the governor.

1       Sec. 405.155. TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBER. The secretary of  
2 state shall provide a toll-free telephone number for use by the  
3 public in contacting the liaison.

4       Sec. 405.156. WEBSITE. The secretary of state shall  
5 provide on its Internet website information regarding the liaison,  
6 including the liaison's name, mailing address, facsimile number,  
7 telephone number, and electronic mail address.

8       Sec. 405.157. PUBLIC RELATIONS. (a) The liaison shall  
9 assist the Native American community of this state in establishing  
10 and maintaining mutual understanding and cooperation with this  
11 state, the federal government, local governments, and other  
12 entities that affect the community. The liaison shall improve  
13 government relations on all levels within a framework of  
14 sovereignty.

15       (b) The liaison shall assist the Native American tribes of  
16 this state in gaining federal recognition.

17       (c) The liaison shall make efforts to increase awareness and  
18 concern for Native American issues.

19       Sec. 405.158. IDENTIFICATION OF SERVICES AND OTHER  
20 RESOURCES. (a) The liaison shall identify public and private  
21 resources available to Native Americans in this state and develop  
22 recommendations and strategies to maximize the acquisition and use  
23 of those resources.

24       (b) The liaison shall make efforts to facilitate the  
25 coordination of state agency services for Native Americans in this  
26 state.

27       Sec. 405.159. RESEARCH REQUIRED. (a) The liaison shall

1 study the living conditions, employment, health, education,  
2 financial status, recreation, social adjustment, and other  
3 conditions affecting the welfare and culture of Native Americans in  
4 this state.

5 (b) The liaison shall collect statistics and other facts  
6 necessary to develop an accurate understanding of the Native  
7 American community in this state.

8 Sec. 405.160. BIENNIAL REPORT. Not later than November 1 of  
9 each even-numbered year, the liaison shall prepare and submit to  
10 the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the speaker of the house  
11 of representatives a report with recommendations regarding Native  
12 American issues.

13 SECTION 2. Not later than November 1, 2003, the governor  
14 shall appoint the Native American liaison under Section 405.152,  
15 Government Code, as added by this Act.

16 SECTION 3. (a) The Native American liaison appointed under  
17 Section 405.152, Government Code, as added by this Act, shall  
18 develop recommendations for the 79th Legislature regarding the  
19 feasibility and benefits of establishing a state recognition  
20 program for the Native American tribes of this state.

21 (b) Not later than November 1, 2004, the liaison shall  
22 provide the first biennial recommendations under Section 405.160,  
23 Government Code, as added by this Act, to the governor, the  
24 lieutenant governor, and the speaker of the house of  
25 representatives.

26 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
27 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as

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1 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
2 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
3 Act takes effect September 1, 2003.