

By: Christian

H.B. No. 2919

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation and operation of a Texas Certified Retirement Community Program.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter L, Chapter 481, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 481.175 to read as follows:

Sec. 481.175. TEXAS CERTIFIED RETIREMENT COMMUNITY PROGRAM. (a) In this section, "program" means the Texas Certified Retirement Community Program.

(b) The department shall, after appropriate research has been conducted, establish and maintain a Texas Certified Retirement Community Program in which retirees and potential retirees are encouraged to make their homes in Texas communities that have met the criteria for certification by the department as a Texas certified retirement community. In support of the program, the department shall identify issues of interest to retirees or potential retirees to inform those persons of the benefits of living in Texas. Issues of interest to retirees or potential retirees may include:

(1) Texas' state and local tax structure;

(2) housing opportunities and cost;

(3) climate;

(4) personal safety;

(5) working opportunities;

1 (6) health care services and other services along the
2 continuum of care, including home-based and community-based
3 services, housing for the elderly, assisted living, personal care,
4 and nursing care facilities;

5 (7) transportation;

6 (8) continuing education;

7 (9) leisure living;

8 (10) recreation;

9 (11) the performing arts;

10 (12) festivals and events;

11 (13) sports at all levels; and

12 (14) other services and facilities that are necessary
13 to enable persons to age in the community and in the least
14 restrictive environment.

15 (c) The mission of the program is to:

16 (1) promote this state as a retirement destination to
17 retirees and potential retirees both in and outside of Texas;

18 (2) assist Texas communities in their efforts to
19 market themselves as retirement locations and to develop
20 communities that retirees would find attractive for a retirement
21 lifestyle;

22 (3) assist in the development of retirement
23 communities and life-care communities for economic development
24 purposes and as a means of providing a potential workforce and
25 enriching Texas communities; and

26 (4) encourage tourism to Texas in the form of mature
27 market travel to Texas in reference to retirement desirability for

1 the future and for the visitation of those who have chosen to retire
2 in Texas.

3 (d) The department shall coordinate the development and
4 planning of the program with the governor and any other state or
5 local entity interested in participating in and promoting the
6 program.

7 (e) To obtain certification as a Texas certified retirement
8 community, the following criteria must be met:

9 (1) a resolution endorsing the local retirement
10 recruitment effort must be adopted by the governing body of the
11 applicable local political subdivision;

12 (2) the program must have an official sponsoring
13 organization that fulfills the duties described by Subsection (f);

14 (3) a hospital and emergency medical services must be
15 readily accessible to the community;

16 (4) the community must maintain information on both
17 resale housing and rental housing to ensure that the quantity is
18 sufficient to meet the needs of potential new retiree residents;
19 and

20 (5) the community must conduct a retiree desirability
21 assessment that emphasizes appropriate factors, including medical
22 services, adult education opportunities, shopping, recreation,
23 cultural opportunities, safety, aging services, and other services
24 along a continuum of care, including home-based and community-based
25 services, housing for the elderly, assisted living, personal care,
26 and nursing care facilities.

27 (f) An official sponsoring organization shall:

1 (1) develop a community profile similar to that used
2 by chambers of commerce, to include facts regarding crime
3 statistics, tax information, recreational opportunities, and
4 housing availability;

5 (2) appoint an individual who will be accountable to
6 the community and to the state; and

7 (3) commit a minimum of \$10,000 each year for the local
8 program.

9 (g) Each local political subdivision must have a general
10 retiree attraction committee and a minimum of four subcommittees as
11 follows:

12 (1) a community inventory/assessment subcommittee,
13 which shall conduct an unbiased inventory and assessment of whether
14 the community can offer the basics that retirees demand and develop
15 a professional portfolio containing brief biographies of
16 professionals in the community;

17 (2) a community relations/fund-raising subcommittee,
18 which shall locate retirees living in the community, act as
19 salespersons for the program, raise money necessary to run the
20 program, recruit subcommittee members, organize special events,
21 and promote and coordinate the program with local entities;

22 (3) a marketing and promotion subcommittee, which
23 shall establish a community image, evaluate target markets, develop
24 and distribute promotional material, and coordinate advertising
25 and public relations campaigns; and

26 (4) an ambassadors subcommittee, which shall serve as
27 the first contact with prospective retirees, provide tours and tour

1 guides when prospects visit the community, respond to inquiries,
2 log contacts made, invite prospects to special community events,
3 and maintain continual contact with prospects until the time the
4 prospects make a retirement location decision.

5 (h) A retiree attraction committee shall:

6 (1) submit a marketing plan detailing the mission, the
7 target market, the competition, an analysis of the community's
8 strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and the
9 strategies the program will employ to attain its goals;

10 (2) work to gain the support of churches, clubs,
11 businesses, and the local media, as necessary for the success of the
12 program; and

13 (3) submit a commitment and long-term plan as
14 described by Subsection (j).

15 (i) During the certification process, a representative of
16 the retirement attraction committee shall attend state training
17 meetings.

18 (j) Before certification is awarded, the retiree attraction
19 committee shall submit a written three-year commitment to the
20 program and a long-term plan outlining steps the community will
21 undertake to maintain its desirability as a destination for
22 retirees. The long-term plan must outline plans to correct any
23 facility and service deficiencies identified in the retiree
24 desirability assessment required by Subsection (e)(5). The written
25 commitment and long-range plan shall be forwarded to the
26 department.

27 (k) Not later than the 90th day after the date of

1 certification, the governing body of a local political subdivision
2 shall submit a complete retiree attraction package to the
3 department.

4 (1) On the certification of a community as a Texas certified
5 retirement community under this section, the department shall
6 provide the following assistance to the community:

7 (1) assistance in the training of local staff and
8 volunteers;

9 (2) ongoing oversight and guidance in marketing, plus
10 updates on national retirement trends;

11 (3) inclusion in the state's national advertising and
12 public relations campaigns and travel show promotions, including a
13 prominent feature on the department's Internet website;

14 (4) eligibility for state financial assistance for
15 brochures, support material, and advertising; and

16 (5) an annual evaluation and progress assessment on
17 maintaining and improving the community's desirability as a home
18 for retirees.

19 (m) The department shall adopt rules to implement this
20 section.

21 SECTION 2. The Texas Department of Economic Development
22 shall implement the program created by Section 481.175, Government
23 Code, as added by this Act, not later than September 1, 2004.

24 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2003.