BILL ANALYSIS

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Tens of thousands of Texans suffer traumatic brain injuries each year. After a brain injury, there is only a 12 to 18 month window for a person to derive the most benefit from rehabilitation. A large number of Texans with brain injuries end up in nursing homes, psychiatric hospitals, state prisons, or become homeless. With adequate rehabilitation, many of these Texans could instead return to work and to their own homes, thus saving taxpayers money and providing a better life for themselves and their families. Many Texans who have been victims of traumatic brain injuries depend on the State's Comprehensive Rehabilitation Fund to receive timely medical care.

Under current law, the Comprehensive Rehabilitation Fund is a dedicated account derived from court costs. Money in the fund may be appropriated to provide rehabilitation services directly or through public or private resources to individuals determined to be eligible for the services under a vocational rehabilitation program or other program established to provide rehabilitative services.

Section 111.060(d), Human Resources Code, added last session to provide contingency funding if needed to address the budget crisis existing at the time, would allow the Comprehensive Rehabilitation Fund to be used for general governmental purposes.

Since it is vital and cost-effective for this funding to be used for its intended purpose rather than to be diverted for general government purposes, House Bill 134 would repeal Section 111.060(d) of the Human Resources Code.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

Repeals Section 111.060(d), Human Resources Code.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2005.