

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1685
By: Dukes
Juvenile Justice & Family Issues
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The State of Texas depends on agencies, departments and commissions to support efforts to react to and reduce the occurrence of child abuse and neglect. These agencies, which promote and foster healthy families, practice certain prevention policies, programs, and activities which aim to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Currently there is no method of joining the various agencies collectively to collaborate on existing programs, assess the strengths and weaknesses of, and recommend improvements for the coordination of these programs.

House Bill 1685 seeks to create an *Interagency Coordinating Council for Building Healthy Families* in order to provide an opportunity for these existing agencies to work together to prevent child abuse and neglect and strengthen families across Texas.

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

This bill orders an *Interagency Coordinating Council for Building Healthy Families* to be established. HB 1685 amends The Family Code to include Chapter 266 which outlines the members, governing body and purpose of this council. *The Interagency Coordinating Council for Building Healthy Families* is charged with facilitating communication and collaboration concerning policies for the prevention of child abuse and neglect among state agencies whose programs and services promote and foster healthy families.

The Council will consist of one member each, of mid to upper management level, from eight agencies including the Department of Family and Protective Service, the Health and Human Services Commission, the Department of State Health Services, the Department of Aging and Disability Services, the Texas Youth Commission, the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Workforce Commission, the Office of the Attorney General and the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission.

The council will meet quarterly and prepare an inventory of child abuse and neglect prevention policies, programs, and activities of each agency represented on the council as well as recommendations for improving the coordination and collaboration for child abuse and neglect prevention programs. The council will be responsible for preparing and submitting minutes to the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the legislature.

This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2005.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2005.