

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2327
By: Villarreal
Public Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Investment in quality early care and education could reduce future education costs for children who have access to these programs. Research demonstrates that early education leads to higher test scores and, importantly, higher high school graduation rates – which ultimately result in higher earnings for students and lower crime and unemployment rates. Children who are exposed to quality early care are more likely to attend a four year college or university, contributing to the creation of a more skilled future workforce.

The 78th legislature passed Senate Bill 76 which represents a significant first step towards the coordination of public pre-kindergarten, Head Start and subsidized child-care in the state of Texas. By encouraging coordination among the various programs that offer early childhood services, the pilot projects established by this bill ensure that we are maximizing our funding and providing services to the more children.

This bill seeks to build on that effort and further study the financing of quality early education in Texas by directing the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the House to establish a Task Force on early education.

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

CSHB 2327 creates the blue ribbon task force on early childhood education to study resource needs for high quality early childhood care and education programs, recommend options to secure additional funding, build on the work of demonstration projects, establish a plan to implement full-day pre-kindergarten, develop a common set of high standards and eligibility criteria for community partnerships, and recommend methods to strengthen readiness standards for early childhood education programs. The task force is to be made up of nine members as designated by this legislation. Three additional members will be appointed as designated. The task force may form working groups. Not later than September 1, 2006 the task force shall report the findings and recommendations to designated individuals.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The substitute includes wording changes throughout to clarify the intent of the bill as well as structural changes to the composition of the Task Force.

The committee substitute expands the scope of the task force study.

The Substitute directs the task force to develop a common set of standards for all districts to create partnerships with early development. The substitute also directs the task force to make recommendations to strengthen school readiness standards for early education programs. The substitute also adds one member to the task force and changes the manner in which all members are appointed. The substitute adds the position of 'public chair' to the task force. The substitute allows the task force to work with members of the public or other members of the legislature in working groups.