

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 984
By: Van de Putte
Human Services
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In Texas there has been a rise of child abuse incidents; and with this comes an increase in juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, and violent crimes. Child protective services has been weakened because stress and high caseloads contribute to a high turnover rate and a large number of unfilled vacancies for caseworker positions.

Currently, there is no mechanism for reimbursing persons when they pursue training to become Child Protective Services caseworkers. S.B. 984 would require the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to study the feasibility of providing financial incentives to individuals to assist them in receiving training for child protective services. If the study establishes that financial incentives are feasible, and HHSC establishes a program for this purpose, the outcome would be an increase in the number of persons training for a career in child protective services, with the ultimate goals of filling vacancies in a timely manner and ensuring that caseworkers have the necessary skills to effectively serve our most vulnerable population, our children.

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

The bill includes a definitions section.

The bill directs HHSC to study the feasibility of providing a financial incentive to assist individuals to receive training for child protective services. The bill sets forth required elements of the study, including considering the feasibility of creating a private foundation to solicit and receive money for use in providing the financial incentives, considering possible means of providing a financial incentive, suggesting criteria an individual must meet to receive the financial incentive, estimating the initial and annual cost to the State of the program, and estimating the savings and costs associated with improved training that may result from financial incentives. The bill also authorizes HHSC, in conducting the study, to cooperate as necessary with any appropriate state agency.

The bill requires HHSC to report the results of the study to certain standing committees of the Legislature not later than September 1, 2006.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2005