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H.B. No. 1747

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of and funding for the Texas  
Entrepreneurship Network.

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

SECTION 1. Subtitle F, Title 4, Government Code, is amended  
by adding Chapter 490 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 490. TEXAS ENTREPRENEURSHIP NETWORK

Sec. 490.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Entrepreneur participant" means an individual  
who has a business or an idea for a business and registers with the  
network.

(2) "Fund" means the Texas Entrepreneurship Network  
fund.

(3) "Network" means the Texas Entrepreneurship  
Network.

Sec. 490.002. ESTABLISHMENT OF NETWORK. (a) The Texas  
Entrepreneurship Network is established to develop and diversify  
the economy of this state through:

(1) the provision of programs and services to  
facilitate the growth and success of entrepreneurs; and

(2) the statewide, results-driven collaboration of  
public and private entities to create jobs and energize sustainable  
local economies through the development of entrepreneurs in this  
state.

1           (b) The Texas Center for Rural Entrepreneurship shall:

2                   (1) operate the network under an agreement with the  
3 Department of Agriculture and as provided by this chapter; and

4                   (2) comply with all reasonable and customary oversight  
5 measures required by the Department of Agriculture.

6           Sec. 490.003. MEMBERS OF NETWORK. (a) The founding members  
7 of the network are:

8                   (1) the Texas Cooperative Extension of The Texas A&M  
9 University System;

10                  (2) the IC2 Institute at The University of Texas at  
11 Austin;

12                  (3) the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural  
13 Resources at Texas Tech University;

14                   (4) the Department of Agriculture;

15                   (5) the Texas Workforce Commission;

16                   (6) the Office of Rural Community Affairs;

17                   (7) the Texas Center for Rural Entrepreneurship;

18                   (8) the Texas Economic Development Council;

19                   (9) CoSERVE at The University of Texas--Pan American;

20 and

21                   (10) the office of external affairs at Texas Southern  
22 University.

23           (b) An institution of higher education, chamber of  
24 commerce, economic development corporation, business, or  
25 organization with an interest in promoting entrepreneurship may  
26 join the network.

27           Sec. 490.004. ADVISORY BOARD. (a) The Texas Center for

1 Rural Entrepreneurship shall establish an advisory board to guide  
2 and advise the operations of the network.

3 (b) The advisory board consists of one representative from  
4 each of the founding members of the network under Section  
5 490.003(a), and at least one member from the private sector. An  
6 organization other than a founding member of the network under  
7 Section 490.003(a) may have a representative on the advisory board  
8 only if the creation of an additional seat on the board is  
9 authorized by a two-thirds majority vote of the existing board.

10 (c) The initial advisory board shall adopt provisions to  
11 determine the terms of board members and stagger the members'  
12 terms, and other provisions necessary to administer the board.

13 (d) Advisory board members serve without compensation but  
14 are entitled to reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred in  
15 traveling to meetings related to the network.

16 Sec. 490.005. GENERAL DUTIES AND GOALS. (a) The network  
17 shall train and refocus existing state and local resources to build  
18 a more prosperous, dynamic, and sustainable economy throughout this  
19 state by:

20 (1) providing coordinated training and services that  
21 enhance the value of the state's existing infrastructure  
22 investments and make the investments available to entrepreneur  
23 participants;

24 (2) developing a statewide network of  
25 entrepreneurship developers and entrepreneurship centers as  
26 provided by Section 490.006;

27 (3) developing a comprehensive network of knowledge,

1 leadership, and financial capital resources accessible through the  
2 network's entrepreneurship developers and entrepreneurship  
3 centers;

4 (4) educating entrepreneur participants and  
5 generating awareness of the network and its programs;

6 (5) identifying the most promising ventures through  
7 activities, including business-plan competitions, and assisting  
8 the ventures' potential for job and wealth creation;

9 (6) developing evaluation methods to measure the  
10 effectiveness of the network and the impact of entrepreneurship on  
11 local and regional economies;

12 (7) developing best practices for successful  
13 entrepreneurship and applied research regarding critical success  
14 factors for entrepreneurial businesses to provide a strategic  
15 competitive advantage for businesses in this state; and

16 (8) collaborating with existing local, state, and  
17 federal agencies and economic development professionals to use the  
18 strengths and assets of the agencies and professionals.

19 (b) The network shall work locally, regionally, and  
20 statewide with educators, agencies, organizations, networks,  
21 businesses, economic developers, consultants, communities,  
22 researchers, or other persons to develop and support strategies to  
23 assist entrepreneur participants and improve the environment for  
24 entrepreneurial development in this state.

25 Sec. 490.006. ENTREPRENEURSHIP SERVICES. (a) The network  
26 shall develop a statewide association of local individuals who are  
27 entrepreneurship developers trained to analyze, evaluate, and

1 develop business plans and help local entrepreneur participants  
2 start, grow, or develop their businesses.

3 (b) The network may establish local entrepreneurship  
4 centers in every county practicable, at which an entrepreneur  
5 participant may access programs, necessary support, and online  
6 resources provided and developed by the network. In establishing  
7 the entrepreneurship centers, the network shall use existing  
8 infrastructure, public and private organizations, and other  
9 resources, including chambers of commerce, universities and  
10 community colleges, county extension offices, Texas Workforce  
11 Commission offices, and local business offices.

12 (c) The network shall adopt requirements for  
13 entrepreneurship centers. An organization must meet the  
14 requirements adopted under this subsection before hosting an  
15 entrepreneurship center.

16 (d) A group of individuals who have services, resources, or  
17 expertise to offer entrepreneur participants may agree to provide  
18 services through the network as an entrepreneurship force.

19 Sec. 490.007. NETWORK PROGRAMS. The network may develop:

20 (1) programs for:

21 (A) business plan development, competitive  
22 enhancement, and management skills development;

23 (B) entrepreneurship best practices training;

24 (C) entrepreneurship education in primary and  
25 secondary schools and community colleges;

26 (D) expanding entrepreneurship in workforce  
27 development programs;

1                   (E) accessing sources of start-up and growth  
2 capital;

3                   (F) training and assisting entrepreneurship  
4 agents who facilitate and assist entrepreneurial efforts; and

5                   (G) community readiness preparation and  
6 evaluation, and community planning;

7                   (2) methods for helping entrepreneur participants  
8 access other loan, guarantee, and grant programs;

9                   (3) necessary policies and regulations; and

10                   (4) collaborations with other entities.

11           Sec. 490.008. TEXAS ENTREPRENEURSHIP NETWORK FUND. (a)

12 The Texas Entrepreneurship Network fund is an account in the  
13 general revenue fund. The Department of Agriculture shall  
14 administer the fund.

15           (b) The following amounts shall be deposited in the fund:

16                   (1) any amounts appropriated by the legislature for  
17 the fund; and

18                   (2) gifts, grants, and other donations received for  
19 the fund.

20           (c) The fund may be used only for network purposes, subject  
21 to Section 490.009.

22           (d) The network may solicit and accept gifts and grants for  
23 the fund from public and private universities and all other public  
24 and private entities.

25           Sec. 490.009. USE OF FUND. Money appropriated to the fund  
26 by the legislature shall be used for:

27                   (1) programs related to local entrepreneurship

1 centers, training, and entrepreneurship developers;  
2 (2) curriculum development, infrastructure, data  
3 management, and research;  
4 (3) technology and economic development research  
5 centers of excellence;  
6 (4) the network's overhead expenses; and  
7 (5) other activities necessary to accomplish the  
8 mission of this chapter.

9 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2005.