

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.R. 97
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State Affairs
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Immigration laws exist to provide a process for legal entry into this country and to protect our national security; clearly, these laws are ineffective in achieving those purposes without proper enforcement. A country that does not know the identity of those entering or leaving the country is inviting criminals and terrorists to live anonymously within its borders. The message from Americans is loud and clear: our first priority must be securing our borders and enforcing current immigration laws, only then should we determine what changes, if any, are needed to our immigration policy. Failure to adequately enforce immigration laws exacts a high price on local taxpayers. Local jails, for example, become filled with illegal immigrants who have committed crimes, costing taxpayers billions of dollars per year. Similarly, local property taxes increase when schools must provide the children of illegal immigrants with costly bilingual and special education. This, too, could be prevented by enforcement of current immigration laws; and Health care is another area affected by lax enforcement of immigration laws. Indigent illegal immigrants who use local hospital emergency rooms for treatment increase the cost of health care for all Americans. Making the enforcement of current immigration laws a priority would enhance national security, fulfill the will of the American people, and save local taxpayers billions of dollars.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

ANALYSIS

House Resolution 97 provides that the House of Representatives of the 80th Texas Legislature hereby express its support for the enforcement of current immigration laws.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

This substitute changes language in two sections that were general and vague in relation to the reality of illegal immigrants in Texas. The first change, in the fourth WHEREAS paragraph, addressed the number of illegal immigrants in Texas prisons. The new language is more specific and accurate, mentioning the approximately 10,000 immigrants convicted of crimes.

The second change removed "bilingual and special" from the fifth WHEREAS paragraph, dealing with the cost of educating the children of illegal immigrants. It is the overall cost of education that is the concern, not a specific type of education.