

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 556
By: Lucio
Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Obesity rates in Texas have reached epidemic proportions. A crucial component of the strategy to curb this epidemic is to monitor rates of obesity. Monitoring prevention efforts allows for evaluation of current practices and can guide future planning.

There is no existing group similar to the council which this bill will create. The School Health Advisory Committee focuses on programs for the health of students in schools and is not required to fulfill the reporting requirements of the Interagency Obesity Council. The council created in SB 556 will monitor efforts to prevent and treat the obesity crisis for both adults and children. This legislation addresses the lack of communication and coordination that exist with health issues in Texas between current leaders.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to any state officer, institution, or agency.

ANALYSIS

SB 556 amends Chapter 114 by adding Subtitle E, Title 2, Health and Safety Code, Section 114.001 which creates the INTERAGENCY RESEARCH COUNCIL.

SB 556 in (a) of this section requires the Commissioner of Agriculture, Commissioner of State Health Services, and Commissioner of Education or a staff member designated by each of those commissioners to meet as an interagency council at least once a year to discuss the status of each agency's programs that promote better health and nutrition and prevent obesity among children and adults in this state, and consider the feasibility of tax incentives for employers who promote activities designed to reduce obesity in the workforce.

SB 556 in (b) requires the council not later than January 15 of each odd-numbered year to submit a report to the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the speaker of the house of representatives on the activities of the council during the preceding two calendar years.

SB 556 in (c) provides that the report submitted by the interagency council must include: a list of the programs within each agency that are designed to promote better health and nutrition; an assessment of the steps taken by each program during the preceding two calendar years; a report of the progress made by taking these steps in reaching each program's goals; the areas of improvement that are needed in each program; and recommendations for future goals or legislation.

SB 556 provides in (c) that a meeting held under this section is not subject to the provisions of the open meetings law, Chapter 551, Government Code.

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, or September 1, 2007.