

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1032
By: Uresti
Transportation
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, this state leads the nation in the total number of persons uninsured for health coverage at over 25 percent of the state's residents. This state also leads the nation in the number of uninsured children for health coverage at over 20 percent of the state's children, more than 1.3 million children total. A substantial number of uninsured children in this state are eligible for Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), but are not enrolled. According to census data, of the 1.3 million uninsured children, more than 900,000 of these children in families that are below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. In addition to the children who are eligible for public programs but not enrolled, there are approximately 400,000 uninsured children above 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

There are a number of affordable child-only health insurance products available to families who do not qualify for public assistance, but many families are unaware of public and private coverage options for children. The state could potentially reduce the number of uninsured children in this state by enhancing efforts to inform families of health coverage options for children. Public programs in Texas, particularly CHIP, have undergone substantial changes in recent years, creating confusion among families. Uninsured families also may not be aware of private coverage options other than employer-based coverage.

As proposed, S.B. 1032 creates "Insure Texas Kids" specialty license plates with proceeds from the sale of the plates going to fund outreach efforts informing families of both private and public health coverage options for 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

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter G, Chapter 504, Transportation Code, by adding Section 504.658, as follows:

Sec. 504.658. INSURE TEXAS KIDS LICENSE PLATES. (a) Requires the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to issue specialty license plates that include the words "Insure Texas Kids."

(b) Requires the remainder of the fee for issuance of the license plates, after deduction of TxDOT's administrative costs, to be deposited to the credit of the general revenue fund and authorizes such to be appropriated only to the Health and Human Services Commission to fund outreach efforts for public and private health benefit plans available for children.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2007.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2007.