

By: Farias

H.B. No. 2291

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a study of victim-offender mediation programs for juvenile offenders.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 141, Human Resources Code, is amended by adding Section 141.055 to read as follows:

Sec. 141.055. STUDY OF VICTIM-OFFENDER MEDIATION PROGRAMS FOR JUVENILE OFFENDERS; REPORT. (a) The commission shall conduct a study of established victim-offender mediation programs for juvenile offenders in this state for the purpose of determining the potential effect on the state's juvenile justice system of establishing guidelines for and expanding the implementation of victim-offender mediation programs for juvenile offenders. The study must evaluate:

(1) the methodology of established victim-offender mediation programs for juvenile offenders;

(2) any reduction in recidivism for juvenile offenders who have successfully completed victim-offender mediation programs;

(3) the success rates for the collection of restitution by juvenile probation departments and the fulfillment of restitution agreements by juvenile offenders; and

(4) typical costs and funding sources for victim-offender mediation programs for juvenile offenders.

1 (b) Before conducting the study, the commission shall:

2 (1) consult any relevant guidelines issued by the
3 United States Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime;
4 and

5 (2) seek assistance from leading experts on
6 victim-offender mediation programs in establishing parameters,
7 information collection techniques, and reasonable legal
8 assumptions in evaluating victim-offender mediation programs for
9 juvenile offenders.

10 (c) Experts from whom the commission may seek assistance
11 under Subsection (b)(2) include:

12 (1) persons who have established and who currently
13 operate victim-offender mediation programs;

14 (2) persons who direct national projects on
15 victim-offender mediation; and

16 (3) professors of law or criminal justice who are
17 employed by institutions of higher education, as defined by Section
18 61.003, Education Code.

19 (d) Not later than July 1, 2008, the commission shall
20 provide a report describing the results of the study to each member
21 of the legislature. The report must include:

22 (1) the estimated cost to the state and local
23 governments of expanding the implementation and administration of
24 victim-offender mediation programs for juvenile offenders;

25 (2) a review of the benefits to juvenile offenders and
26 victims of participating in victim-offender mediation programs for
27 juvenile offenders; and

1 (3) any recommendations for legislation establishing
2 guidelines for and expanding the implementation and administration
3 of victim-offender mediation programs for juvenile offenders in
4 this state.

5 (e) This section expires December 1, 2008.

6 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
7 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
8 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
9 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
10 Act takes effect September 1, 2007.