

By: Nelson

S.B. No. 200

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the expansion of faith- and community-based health and human services initiatives.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 401, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter G to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER G. TEXAS MENTORING INITIATIVE

Sec. 401.151. ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSE OF TEXAS MENTORING INITIATIVE. (a) The office of the governor shall establish the Texas mentoring initiative to fund activities that:

(1) create or expand mentoring opportunities in this state;

(2) promote responsible fatherhood and healthy marriages; and

(3) increase the capacity of faith- and community-based organizations, as defined by Section 535.001, to provide mentoring services to persons in this state and increase the participation of those organizations in providing those services.

(b) The office of the governor shall administer the Texas mentoring initiative subject to the availability of funds appropriated for that purpose.

Sec. 401.152. COORDINATION WITH STATE AGENCIES. To implement activities of the Texas mentoring initiative, the office

1 of the governor may coordinate with:

- 2 (1) the Health and Human Services Commission;
- 3 (2) the Office of the Attorney General;
- 4 (3) the Texas Education Agency;
- 5 (4) the Texas Workforce Commission; and
- 6 (5) other state agencies as appropriate.

7 Sec. 401.153. COORDINATION WITH OTHER ENTITIES. To better  
8 integrate the activities of the Texas mentoring initiative, the  
9 office of the governor may coordinate those activities with:

- 10 (1) agencies of the federal government and political  
11 subdivisions of this state;
- 12 (2) faith- and community-based organizations, as  
13 defined by Section 535.001; and
- 14 (3) other persons with expertise or interest in  
15 mentoring services.

16 Sec. 401.154. GRANTS. The office of the governor shall  
17 provide grants through the Texas mentoring initiative to fund  
18 activities that:

- 19 (1) expand mentoring opportunities in this state;
- 20 (2) provide mentoring to at-risk youth to help those  
21 youth with leadership skills and personal success;
- 22 (3) serve children of persons who are incarcerated;
- 23 (4) improve school attendance and performance;
- 24 (5) promote responsible fatherhood by educating  
25 fathers regarding their critical role with respect to their  
26 families and children;
- 27 (6) expand the involvement of businesses, schools, and

1 faith- and community-based organizations, as defined by Section  
2 535.001, in providing mentoring services and increase partnership  
3 opportunities between those entities and state government;

4 (7) discourage the use of drugs and alcohol by youth;

5 (8) promote healthy marriages through education and  
6 marriage skills programs; and

7 (9) support the renewing our communities account under  
8 Subchapter D, Chapter 535.

9 SECTION 2. (a) Subchapter B, Chapter 531, Government Code,  
10 is amended by adding Section 531.088 to read as follows:

11 Sec. 531.088. DATABASE OF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES. (a)

12 The commission shall establish a searchable Internet database that  
13 lists opportunities throughout this state for volunteers to provide  
14 assistance to agencies of this state in delivering services to  
15 persons in this state and to faith- and community-based  
16 organizations that partner with a state agency to deliver those  
17 services. The commission shall adopt rules regarding:

18 (1) minimum requirements the state agency or faith- or  
19 community-based organization must meet to submit an opportunity for  
20 listing on the database, including:

21 (A) the types of volunteer opportunities the  
22 agency or organization may submit; and

23 (B) the minimum information that must be provided  
24 for a listing on the database; and

25 (2) the method by which a prospective volunteer may  
26 contact the appropriate person at the agency or organization that  
27 lists an opportunity on the database.

1       (b) Each state agency that has a faith- and community-based  
2 liaison designated under Section 535.051 shall provide to the  
3 commission information regarding volunteer opportunities described  
4 by Subsection (a) and shall regularly update that information.

5       (c) The commission may:

6           (1) provide on the Internet website containing the  
7 database required by this section links to other appropriate  
8 Internet websites that list volunteer opportunities with  
9 charitable organizations; and

10          (2) create a link to the Internet website containing  
11 the database that a person may download and use on another Internet  
12 website to refer other persons to the database.

13       (d) The commission may:

14           (1) directly operate and maintain the database  
15 required by this section; or

16           (2) contract or partner with another entity for the  
17 operation and maintenance of the database.

18       (b) The Health and Human Services Commission shall  
19 establish the database of volunteer opportunities required by  
20 Section 531.088, Government Code, as added by this section, not  
21 later than February 1, 2008.

22       SECTION 3. (a) Subtitle I, Title 4, Government Code, is  
23 amended by adding Chapter 535 to read as follows:

24       CHAPTER 535. PROVISION OF HUMAN SERVICES THROUGH FAITH- AND  
25                   COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

26                   SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

27       Sec. 535.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

1           (1) "Community-based organization" means a nonprofit  
2 corporation or association that is located in close proximity to  
3 the population the organization serves.

4           (2) "Faith-based organization" means a nonprofit  
5 corporation or association that:

6                   (A) is operated through a religious or  
7 denominational organization, including an organization that is  
8 operated for religious, educational, or charitable purposes and  
9 that is operated, supervised, or controlled, wholly or partly, by  
10 or in connection with a religious organization; or

11                   (B) clearly demonstrates through the  
12 organization's mission statement, policies, or practices that the  
13 organization is guided or motivated by religion.

14           Sec. 535.002. PURPOSE. The purpose of this chapter is to  
15 strengthen the capacity of faith- and community-based  
16 organizations and to forge stronger partnerships between those  
17 organizations and state government for the legitimate public  
18 purpose of providing charitable and social services to persons in  
19 this state.

20           Sec. 535.003. CONSTRUCTION. This chapter may not be  
21 construed to:

22                   (1) exempt a faith- or community-based organization  
23 from any applicable state or federal law; or

24                   (2) be an endorsement or sponsorship by this state of  
25 the religious character, expression, beliefs, doctrines, or  
26 practices of a faith-based organization.

27           Sec. 535.004. APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN FEDERAL LAW. A

1 power authorized or duty imposed under this chapter must be  
2 performed in a manner that is consistent with 42 U.S.C. Section  
3 604a.

4 [Sections 535.005-535.050 reserved for expansion]

5 SUBCHAPTER B. GOVERNMENTAL LIAISONS FOR FAITH- AND

6 COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

7 Sec. 535.051. DESIGNATION OF FAITH- AND COMMUNITY-BASED  
8 LIAISONS. (a) The executive commissioner, in consultation with  
9 the governor, shall designate one employee from each health and  
10 human services agency to serve as a liaison for faith- and  
11 community-based organizations.

12 (b) The chief administrative officer of each of the  
13 following state agencies, in consultation with the governor, shall  
14 designate one employee from the agency to serve as a liaison for  
15 faith- and community-based organizations:

- 16 (1) the Office of Rural Community Affairs;  
17 (2) the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality;  
18 (3) the Texas Department of Criminal Justice;  
19 (4) the Texas Department of Housing and Community  
20 Affairs;  
21 (5) the Texas Education Agency;  
22 (6) the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission;  
23 (7) the Texas Veterans Commission;  
24 (8) the Texas Workforce Commission;  
25 (9) the Texas Youth Commission; and  
26 (10) other state agencies as determined by the  
27 governor.

1       Sec. 535.052. GENERAL DUTIES OF LIAISONS. A faith- and  
2 community-based liaison designated under Section 535.051 shall:

3           (1) identify and remove unnecessary barriers to  
4 partnerships between the state agency the liaison represents and  
5 faith- and community-based organizations;

6           (2) provide information and training, if necessary,  
7 for employees of the state agency the liaison represents regarding  
8 equal opportunity standards for faith- and community-based  
9 organizations seeking to partner with state government;

10          (3) facilitate the identification of practices with  
11 demonstrated effectiveness for faith- and community-based  
12 organizations that partner with the state agency the liaison  
13 represents;

14          (4) work with the appropriate departments and programs  
15 of the state agency the liaison represents to conduct outreach  
16 efforts to inform and welcome faith- and community-based  
17 organizations that have not traditionally formed partnerships with  
18 the agency;

19          (5) coordinate all efforts with the governor's office  
20 of faith-based and community initiatives and provide information,  
21 support, and assistance to that office as requested to the extent  
22 permitted by law and if feasible; and

23          (6) attend conferences sponsored by federal agencies  
24 and offices and other relevant entities to become and remain  
25 informed of issues and developments regarding faith- and  
26 community-based initiatives.

27       Sec. 535.053. INTERAGENCY COORDINATING GROUP. (a) The

1 interagency coordinating group for faith- and community-based  
2 initiatives is composed of each faith- and community-based liaison  
3 designated under Section 535.051.

4 (b) The interagency coordinating group shall work across  
5 state agencies to facilitate the removal of unnecessary interagency  
6 barriers to partnerships between state agencies and faith- and  
7 community-based organizations.

8 Sec. 535.054. REPORTS; MEETINGS. (a) A liaison designated  
9 under Section 535.051 shall:

10 (1) provide periodic reports to the executive  
11 commissioner or other chief executive officer who designated the  
12 liaison, as applicable, on a schedule determined by the person who  
13 designated the liaison; and

14 (2) report annually to the governor's office of  
15 faith-based and community initiatives regarding the liaison's  
16 efforts to comply with the duties imposed under Sections 535.052  
17 and 535.053.

18 (b) Each report made under Subsection (a)(2) must be made  
19 available to the public through posting on the office of the  
20 governor's Internet website.

21 [Sections 535.055-535.100 reserved for expansion]

22 SUBCHAPTER C. CENTER FOR FAITH- AND COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES

23 Sec. 535.101. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

24 (1) "Community-based initiative" means a health or  
25 human services initiative operated by a community-based  
26 organization.

27 (2) "Faith-based initiative" means a health or human



1 services initiative operated by a faith-based organization.

2 (3) "Center" means the center for faith- and  
3 community-based initiatives established under Section 535.102.

4 Sec. 535.102. ESTABLISHMENT OF CENTER FOR FAITH- AND  
5 COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES. The executive commissioner shall  
6 establish within the commission a center for faith- and  
7 community-based initiatives. The center must be operated in a  
8 manner that promotes effective partnerships between the commission  
9 or a health and human services agency and faith- and  
10 community-based organizations to serve residents of this state who  
11 need assistance.

12 Sec. 535.103. OPERATION OF CENTER. (a) In consultation  
13 with the governor, the executive commissioner shall appoint a  
14 director for the center.

15 (b) The commission shall provide the center with  
16 appropriate staff, administrative support services, and other  
17 resources to enable the center to perform the duties imposed under  
18 this subchapter.

19 Sec. 535.104. GENERAL DUTIES OF CENTER. The center shall:

20 (1) identify and remove unnecessary barriers to  
21 partnerships between the commission or a health and human services  
22 agency and faith- and community-based organizations;

23 (2) provide information and training, if necessary,  
24 for employees of the commission and health and human services  
25 agencies regarding equal opportunity standards for faith- and  
26 community-based organizations seeking to partner with state  
27 government;

1           (3) facilitate the identification of practices with  
2 demonstrated effectiveness for faith- and community-based  
3 organizations that partner with the commission or a health and  
4 human services agency;

5           (4) based on the practices identified under  
6 Subdivision (3), develop proposals for innovative pilot programs  
7 and initiatives;

8           (5) work with the appropriate departments and programs  
9 of the commission and health and human services agencies to conduct  
10 outreach efforts to inform and welcome faith- and community-based  
11 organizations that have not traditionally formed partnerships with  
12 the commission or a health and human services agency;

13           (6) if appropriate, coordinate the use of volunteers  
14 from faith- and community-based organizations in providing health  
15 and human services;

16           (7) coordinate all efforts with the governor's office  
17 of faith-based and community initiatives and provide information,  
18 support, and assistance to that office as requested to the extent  
19 permitted by law and if feasible;

20           (8) send representatives to attend conferences  
21 sponsored by federal agencies and offices and other relevant  
22 entities to become and remain informed of issues and developments  
23 regarding faith- and community-based initiatives; and

24           (9) serve as an informational resource for the  
25 legislature on ongoing efforts by this state to enhance the role of  
26 faith- and community-based organizations in providing human  
27 services through partnerships with state agencies.

1       Sec. 535.105. REPORTS. (a) The director of the center  
2 shall:

3           (1) provide periodic reports to the executive  
4 commissioner regarding the center's performance of the duties  
5 imposed under Section 535.104; and

6           (2) report annually to the governor's office of  
7 faith-based and community initiatives regarding the center's  
8 efforts to perform the duties imposed under Section 535.104 and the  
9 center's outcomes on the performance measures determined by the  
10 center.

11       (b) Each report made under Subsection (a)(2) must be made  
12 available to the public through posting on the office of the  
13 governor's Internet website.

14       [Sections 535.106-535.150 reserved for expansion]

15       SUBCHAPTER D. RENEWING OUR COMMUNITIES ACCOUNT

16       Sec. 535.151. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "account"  
17 means the renewing our communities account.

18       Sec. 535.152. PURPOSES OF SUBCHAPTER. Recognizing that  
19 faith- and community-based organizations provide a range of vital  
20 charitable services to persons in this state, the purposes of this  
21 subchapter are to:

22           (1) increase the impact and effectiveness of those  
23 organizations;

24           (2) forge stronger partnerships between those  
25 organizations and state government so that communities are  
26 empowered to serve persons in need and community capacity for  
27 providing services is strengthened; and

1           (3) create a funding mechanism that builds on the  
2 established efforts of those organizations and operates to create  
3 new partnerships in local communities for the benefit of this  
4 state.

5           Sec. 535.153. RENEWING OUR COMMUNITIES ACCOUNT. (a) The  
6 renewing our communities account is an account in the general  
7 revenue fund that may be appropriated only to the commission for the  
8 purposes and activities authorized by this subchapter and for  
9 reasonable administrative expenses under this subchapter.

10           (b) The account consists of:

11                   (1) all money appropriated for the purposes of this  
12 subchapter;

13                   (2) any gifts, grants, or donations received for the  
14 purposes of this subchapter; and

15                   (3) interest earned on money in the account.

16           (c) The account is exempt from the application of Section  
17 403.095.

18           (d) The purposes of the account are to:

19                   (1) increase the capacity of and strengthen faith- and  
20 community-based organizations to provide charitable services to  
21 persons in this state who are in need of those services;

22                   (2) assist local governmental entities in  
23 establishing local offices for faith- and community-based  
24 initiatives;

25                   (3) foster better partnerships between state  
26 government and faith- and community-based organizations to provide  
27 charitable services to persons in this state; and

1           (4) leverage state and local resources to acquire  
2 federal or private grant funds to provide charitable services in  
3 this state.

4           Sec. 535.154. POWERS AND DUTIES REGARDING ACCOUNT. (a) The  
5 commission shall:

6           (1) develop and implement a competitive process for  
7 awarding grants from the account that is consistent with state law  
8 and includes objective selection criteria;

9           (2) oversee the delivery of training and other  
10 assistance activities under this subchapter;

11           (3) develop criteria limiting awards of grants under  
12 Subsection (b)(1) to small and medium-sized faith- and  
13 community-based organizations that provide charitable services to  
14 persons in this state;

15           (4) establish general state priorities for the  
16 account; and

17           (5) establish and monitor performance and outcome  
18 measures for persons to whom grants are awarded under this  
19 subchapter.

20           (b) The commission may:

21           (1) award grants from the account to faith- and  
22 community-based organizations that provide charitable services to  
23 persons in this state for capacity-building purposes;

24           (2) directly, or through agreements with one or more  
25 entities that serve faith- and community-based organizations that  
26 provide charitable services to persons in this state:

27                   (A) assist faith- and community-based

1 organizations with:

2 (i) writing or managing grants through  
3 workshops or other forms of guidance;

4 (ii) obtaining legal assistance related to  
5 forming a corporation or obtaining an exemption from taxation under  
6 the Internal Revenue Code; and

7 (iii) obtaining information about or  
8 referrals to entities that provide expertise in accounting, legal,  
9 or tax issues, program development matters, or other organizational  
10 topics;

11 (B) provide information or assistance to faith-  
12 and community-based organizations related to building the  
13 organizations' capacity for providing services;

14 (C) facilitate the formation of networks, the  
15 coordination of services, and the sharing of resources among faith-  
16 and community-based organizations;

17 (D) in cooperation with existing efforts, if  
18 possible, conduct needs assessments to identify gaps in services in  
19 a community that present a need for developing or expanding  
20 services;

21 (E) work with faith- and community-based  
22 organizations to identify the organizations' needs for  
23 improvements in their internal capacity for providing services;

24 (F) provide faith- and community-based  
25 organizations with information on and assistance in identifying or  
26 using practices with demonstrated effectiveness for delivering  
27 charitable services to persons, families, and communities and in

1 replicating charitable services programs that have demonstrated  
2 effectiveness; and

3 (G) encourage research into the impact of  
4 organizational capacity on program delivery for faith- and  
5 community-based organizations;

6 (3) award grants from the account to local  
7 governmental entities to provide seed money for local offices for  
8 faith- and community-based initiatives;

9 (4) assist a local governmental entity in creating a  
10 better partnership between government and faith- and  
11 community-based organizations to provide charitable services to  
12 persons in this state;

13 (5) use the account to provide matching money for  
14 federal or private grant programs that further the purposes of the  
15 account as described by Section 535.153(d); and

16 (6) contract with the governor's office of faith-based  
17 and community initiatives to administer programs or perform duties  
18 or activities under this subchapter.

19 Sec. 535.155. FAITH- AND COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES  
20 ADVISORY COMMITTEE. (a) The executive commissioner shall appoint  
21 faith and community leaders in this state to serve on the faith- and  
22 community-based initiatives advisory committee. The advisory  
23 committee members must be representative of the religious and  
24 cultural diversity of this state.

25 (b) The advisory committee shall make recommendations to  
26 the executive commissioner regarding the executive commissioner's  
27 powers and duties with respect to the account as described by

1 Section 535.154.

2 (c) Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, the  
3 advisory committee shall meet at least twice each calendar year.  
4 The advisory committee is not required to meet if the remaining  
5 amount appropriated from the account to the commission for the  
6 state fiscal biennium is insufficient for the performance of any  
7 duties or activities under this subchapter.

8 (d) Chapter 2110 does not apply to the advisory committee.

9 (e) The advisory committee is subject to Chapter 551.

10 (b) The executive commissioner of the Health and Human  
11 Services Commission and the chief executive officers of the Office  
12 of Rural Community Affairs, the Texas Commission on Environmental  
13 Quality, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the Texas  
14 Department of Housing and Community Affairs, the Texas Education  
15 Agency, the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, the Texas Veterans  
16 Commission, the Texas Workforce Commission, the Texas Youth  
17 Commission, and any other state agency as determined by the  
18 governor shall designate the liaisons for faith- and  
19 community-based initiatives as required under Section 535.051,  
20 Government Code, as added by this section, not later than December  
21 1, 2007.

22 (c) The executive commissioner of the Health and Human  
23 Services Commission shall appoint the director of the center for  
24 faith- and community-based initiatives as required by Section  
25 535.103, Government Code, as added by this section, not later than  
26 December 15, 2007.

27 (d) The center for faith- and community-based initiatives



1 established under Section 535.102, Government Code, as added by  
2 this section, shall file a report with the governor's office of  
3 faith-based and community initiatives not later than February 15,  
4 2008, that includes the center's performance measures on which the  
5 center will report its outcomes in each annual report under Section  
6 535.105, Government Code, as added by this section.

7 SECTION 4. If before implementing any provision of this Act  
8 a state agency determines that a waiver or authorization from a  
9 federal agency is necessary for implementation of that provision,  
10 the agency affected by the provision shall request the waiver or  
11 authorization and may delay implementing that provision until the  
12 waiver or authorization is granted.

13 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
14 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
15 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
16 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
17 Act takes effect September 1, 2007.