

Amend **HB 3864** (Senate committee printing) by adding the following sections to the bill, numbered appropriately, and by renumbering any subsequent sections of the bill accordingly.

SECTION _____. Subtitle D, Title 4, Government Code, is amended by adding Chapter 450 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 450. TEXAS PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN IN NATURE

SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

Sec. 450.001. DEFINITION. In this chapter, "partnership" means the Texas Partnership for Children in Nature.

Sec. 450.002. SUNSET PROVISION. The Texas Partnership for Children in Nature is subject to Chapter 325 (Texas Sunset Act). Unless continued in existence as provided by that chapter, the partnership is abolished and this chapter expires September 1, 2021.

Sec. 450.003. COMPOSITION OF PARTNERSHIP. The partnership is composed of seven members as follows:

(1) three public members as follows, appointed by the executive director of the Parks and Wildlife Department in consultation with the commissioner of education:

(A) one public member who represents parent-teacher organizations; and

(B) two public members each of whom represents a nonprofit organization dedicated to education concerning or protection of the environment; and

(2) four ex officio members as follows:

(A) the executive director of the Parks and Wildlife Department;

(B) the commissioner of education;

(C) the commissioner of state health services; and

(D) the commissioner of agriculture.

Sec. 450.004. PUBLIC MEMBERS: ELIGIBILITY; APPOINTMENT; VACANCY. (a) A person appointed as a public member of the partnership must be a resident of this state.

(b) Appointments of public members to the partnership shall be made:

(1) without regard to the race, color, disability,

sex, religion, age, or national origin of an appointee; and

(2) so that various geographic areas of this state are represented in the partnership.

(c) The governor, in consultation with the executive director of the Parks and Wildlife Department and the commissioner of education, shall fill any vacancy in an appointed position in the partnership for the unexpired portion of the term.

Sec. 450.005. EX OFFICIO MEMBERS: ELIGIBILITY; DESIGNATION OF REPRESENTATIVE. (a) An ex officio member of the partnership vacates the person's position in the partnership if the person ceases to hold the position that qualifies the person for service in the partnership.

(b) An ex officio member may designate a representative to serve in the partnership in the member's place. A representative designated under this subsection must be an officer or employee of the state agency that employs the ex officio member or of which the ex officio member is an officer.

Sec. 450.006. REMOVAL OF PUBLIC MEMBER. (a) It is a ground for removal of a public member from the partnership if the member:

(1) is ineligible for public membership under Section 450.004(a);

(2) cannot because of illness or disability discharge the member's duties for a substantial part of the term for which the member is appointed; or

(3) is absent from more than two consecutive partnership meetings that the member is eligible to attend during a calendar year unless the absence is excused by majority vote of the members of the partnership.

(b) The validity of an action of the partnership is not affected by the fact that the action is taken when a ground for removal of a partnership member exists.

(c) If a member of the partnership has knowledge that a potential ground for removal exists, the member shall notify the presiding officer of the partnership of the potential ground. The presiding officer shall then notify the governor and the attorney general that a potential ground for removal exists.

Sec. 450.007. TERM OF PUBLIC MEMBER. (a) A public member

of the partnership serves a term of four years.

(b) A public member is eligible for reappointment to another term or part of a term.

(c) A public member may not serve more than two consecutive terms. For purposes of this prohibition, a member is considered to have served a term only if the member has served more than half of the term.

Sec. 450.008. OFFICERS; WORKING GROUPS. (a) The executive director of the Parks and Wildlife Department or the executive director's representative serves as the presiding officer of the partnership.

(b) The presiding officer of the partnership may appoint one or more working groups for any purpose consistent with the duties of the partnership under this chapter.

Sec. 450.009. COMPENSATION; EXPENSES. (a) A public member of the partnership is not entitled to compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for the travel expenses incurred by the member while transacting partnership business, as provided by the General Appropriations Act.

(b) An ex officio member's service in the partnership is an additional duty of the underlying position that qualifies the member for service in the partnership. The entitlement of an ex officio member to compensation or to reimbursement for travel expenses incurred while transacting partnership business is governed by the law that applies to the member's service in that underlying position, and any payment to the member for either purpose must be made from money that may be used for the purpose and is available to the state agency that the member serves in that underlying position.

Sec. 450.010. MEETINGS; VOTING; PUBLIC ACCESS. (a) The partnership shall meet at the call of the presiding officer.

(b) An ex officio member of the partnership may vote on partnership business.

(c) The partnership shall develop and implement policies that provide the public with a reasonable opportunity to appear before the partnership and speak on any issue under the jurisdiction of the partnership.

Sec. 450.011. STAFF COORDINATION. The Parks and Wildlife Department shall provide staff support to the partnership, in coordination with the Texas Education Agency, the Department of State Health Services, and the Texas Department of Agriculture.

[Sections 450.012-450.050 reserved for expansion]

SUBCHAPTER B. POWERS AND DUTIES; FUNDING

Sec. 450.051. ADVISORY STATUS OF PARTNERSHIP. (a) In implementing its powers and duties under this chapter, the partnership functions only in an advisory capacity. Membership in the partnership does not constitute a public office.

(b) Chapter 2110 does not apply to the partnership.

Sec. 450.052. GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES OF PARTNERSHIP.

(a) The partnership shall promote the well-being of this state's children by providing children with opportunities to spend more time outdoors and to learn about the environment through experiential activities outdoors and formal and informal education concerning the environment. To accomplish those purposes, the partnership shall:

(1) develop and assist in the implementation of a plan to provide children with structured and unstructured opportunities for outdoor recreation, scientific study, and learning that includes:

(A) development and implementation of strategies to provide increased support for programs under which school grounds are converted into natural habitats for play and outdoor classrooms;

(B) establishment of trail systems that connect communities, parks, and schools to encourage walking, biking, and increased time outdoors by children and their families;

(C) establishment of nature play areas in communities to offer outdoor experiences close to children's homes;

(D) establishment, in partnership with the Department of Family and Protective Services, the advisory council on juvenile services, and appropriate community nonprofit organizations, of a statewide civic justice corps to provide students at risk of dropping out of school with opportunities to serve on conservation crews in state parks and on other public land;

(E) establishment, in cooperation with school districts, local parks departments, and appropriate nonprofit organizations, of an outdoor classroom program on public land that provides service learning opportunities and voluntary programming aligned with the required curriculum under Section 28.002, Education Code;

(F) provision to children and their families of increased access to naturalists who present interpretive activities at state parks and on other public land to enhance discovery and enjoyment of this state's natural resources; and

(G) provision to children who are members of minority groups of increased access to state parks and other public land, through partnership with appropriate organizations;

(2) develop and assist in the implementation of a state environmental literacy plan that includes:

(A) a review of current environmental education in public schools, including student environmental literacy levels;

(B) identification of curriculum necessary to develop environmentally literate students;

(C) identification of model outdoor field and service learning experiences that can be integrated into the required curriculum under Section 28.002, Education Code;

(D) professional development opportunities for professional educators and for students who are in educator preparation programs and development programs for other environmental educators; and

(E) methods to annually measure and report, at the state and local levels, progress of public school students toward becoming environmentally literate;

(3) devise a method to measure:

(A) baseline data concerning the amount of time children spend outdoors; and

(B) any increased time children spend outdoors as a result of the partnership's efforts; and

(4) identify opportunities for and barriers to implementing environmental literacy programs in public schools and on public land.

(b) Not later than December 1 of each even-numbered year, the partnership shall submit a report to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the presiding officer of each legislative standing committee with primary jurisdiction over primary and secondary education, natural resources, land and resource management, or environmental regulation regarding the partnership's recommendations concerning the partnership's duties under Subsection (a).

(c) The partnership shall adopt rules as necessary for its own procedures.

Sec. 450.053. FUNDING. The partnership may accept gifts and grants from a public or private source for the partnership to

use in performing the partnership's powers and duties under this chapter.

SECTION 2. As soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, appointments of public members shall be made to the Texas Partnership for Children in Nature as provided by Chapter 450, Government Code, as added by this Act. Notwithstanding Section 450.007, Government Code, as added by this Act, the terms of initial public members appointed to the Texas Partnership for Children in Nature expire February 1, 2013.

SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2009.