

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 81ST LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

May 21, 2009

TO: Honorable John Whitmire, Chair, Senate Committee on Criminal Justice

FROM: John S. O'Brien, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB4009 by Weber (Relating to the establishment of a victim assistance program to provide services to domestic victims of trafficking.), **As Engrossed**

No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would require the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to create a victim assistance grant program to provide services to domestic victims of trafficking. The program must have a searchable database of assistance programs for victims of domestic trafficking. The database must include mental health services, other health services, services to meet victim's basic needs, case management services, and any other services HHSC deems reasonable. The bill would require HHSC to implement an outreach program to victims about the availability of services.

The bill would require HHSC to create and provide training to judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement personnel about the needs of domestic trafficking victims, the availability of services, the database of services, and potential funding sources for those services.

The bill would require HHSC to award grants to private and nonprofit organizations that provide services to domestic trafficking victims. This grant program is required only if funds are available. HHSC estimates that \$110,400 would be required for the grants in fiscal year 2011 to serve 48 victims, rising to \$165,600 to serve 72 victims in fiscal year 2014.

HHSC would be permitted to fund the grant program with any appropriated funds and may accept gifts, grants and donations from any source. The bill requires HHSC to conduct a study to identify additional revenue streams. HHSC must submit a report on the study by December 1, 2010.

No later than December 1 of each even numbered year HHSC would be required to submit a report to the legislature summarizing the activities, funding, and outcomes of the programs.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2009.

Although the agency states that it would not implement the legislation without an appropriation, it is assumed that HHSC would have resources to draw upon to meet some of the bill's provisions. The fiscal impact could be absorbed within existing resources.

Local Government Impact

The bill would create a Victim Assistance Program to provide services to victims of human trafficking provided they are a permanent legal resident or a citizen of the United States. The program would include a grant program, training programs for judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement personnel; and an outreach initiative to ensure that victims, judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement personnel are aware of the availability of services through the program. Local governmental entities that provide assistance to domestic victims would be eligible to apply for a grant as defined by the provisions of the bill.

The fiscal impact to local governments that are awarded grants could be positive depending on the amount of the grant that would offset costs for services provided to victims; however, according to the Texas Association of Counties, the fiscal impact is not anticipated to be significant.

Source Agencies: 212 Office of Court Administration, Texas Judicial Council, 405 Department of Public Safety, 529 Health and Human Services Commission

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