

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2615
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Pensions, Investments & Financial Services
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Although students are exposed to a small amount of financial literacy education through the Texas public school curriculum, the need for more comprehensive financial literacy, including practical knowledge and skills, becomes more important when citizens reach adulthood and face the many financial challenges that come with adult responsibilities. Financial literacy helps an individual manage personal finances responsibly, including saving, investing, and budgeting, but finding the information one needs can be a daunting task and many do not know where to start.

Compiling information about reputable resources in one document will more efficiently guide and educate citizens who wish to become more financially literate and know more about the many credible resources that are available, including how to contact such resources. Increased public financial literacy will contribute to the long-term improvement of the Texas economy as citizens learn how to avoid bankruptcy and credit card debt, improve credit scores, save for the future, and spend wisely.

C.S.H.B. 2615 seeks to address this need for better financial literacy by requiring the Office of Consumer Credit Commissioner to collect information on programs, including classes, and other publicly available resources that focus on teaching financial literacy, compile the information into a one-page document, and post the document on the office's Internet website and requiring a health and human services agency to ensure that the document is offered to persons who receive agency services at locations where such persons frequently access those agency services.

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

C.S.H.B. 2615 amends the Finance Code to require the consumer credit commissioner to collect information on programs, including classes, and other resources available to the public that focus on teaching financial literacy, compile the information into a one-page document, and post the document on the Internet website of the Office of Consumer Credit Commissioner. The bill requires a health and human services agency to ensure that the document is offered to persons who receive services from the agency at locations at which those persons frequently access services provided by the agency. The bill requires the commissioner to periodically update the information contained in the document. The bill requires the Office of Consumer Credit Commissioner to produce and publish on the office's Internet website the required document not later than December 1, 2011.

C.S.H.B. 2615 defines "financial literacy" and defines "health and human services agencies" by reference to the Government Code.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2011.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 2615 differs from the original by amending the Finance Code to require the consumer credit commissioner to collect information on publicly available programs and other resources that focus on teaching financial literacy, compile the information into a one-page document, and post the document on the office's Internet website, whereas the original amends the Government Code to require the comptroller of public accounts to collect such information and compile the information in a brochure.

C.S.H.B. 2615 omits a provision included in the original requiring the comptroller to identify appropriate state agencies through which to distribute the brochures to the public, such as the Health and Human Services Commission, health and human services agencies, and other agencies whose employees frequently interact with the public and to make the brochures available to the identified agencies.

C.S.H.B. 2615 differs from the original by requiring a health and human services agency to ensure that the one-page document containing financial literacy program information is offered to persons who receive services from the agency at locations at which those persons frequently access such agency services, whereas the original requires a state agency identified as appropriate by the comptroller for distributing the brochures to ensure that the brochures are readily available to interested persons at locations where those persons frequently access agency services.

C.S.H.B. 2615 differs from the original by requiring the consumer credit commissioner to periodically update the information contained in the one-page document, whereas the original requires the comptroller to periodically update the information contained in the brochure and to make the updated brochures available to the state agencies identified as appropriate for distributing the brochures.

C.S.H.B. 2615 differs from the original by requiring the Office of Consumer Credit Commissioner to produce and publish on the office's Internet website the required document not later than December 1, 2011, whereas the original requires the comptroller of public accounts to produce and distribute to appropriate state agencies the required brochure no later than that same date.