

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1154
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Human Services
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Alarming statistics from national and state child welfare organizations indicate the extent of child abuse and neglect in the United States and in Texas. Recently enacted legislation established a statewide blue ribbon task force to develop a strategy to prevent child abuse and neglect in Texas, which made significant strides in establishing such a strategy, as outlined in an interim report made available to legislators. In order for the important work of the task force to continue, S.B. 1154 reestablishes the task force for the development of a strategy to reduce child abuse and neglect and improve child welfare. The bill's goals include fostering cooperation among state agencies and local governments and ensuring that the agencies responsible for children receive a top-to-bottom review of their policies, procedures, and resources.

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

S.B. 1154 amends the Family Code to establish a task force to develop a strategy to reduce child abuse and neglect and improve child welfare. The bill provides for the appointment and qualifications of the nine members of the task force and requires the governor and lieutenant governor to appoint the members by October 1, 2011. The bill addresses the reimbursement of members' travel expenses, election of a presiding officer, periodic meetings, and the application of the law governing state agency advisory committees to the task force. The bill requires the task force to identify all existing programs in Texas relating to reducing child abuse and neglect or improving child welfare and, of the programs identified, those programs that receive state money.

S.B. 1154 requires the task force to establish a strategy for reducing child abuse and neglect and for improving child welfare in Texas and sets out the required duties of the task force in establishing that strategy. The bill authorizes the revised strategic plan to include certain elements and requires the task force to submit the plan to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives not later than December 1, 2012. The bill requires certain state agencies and institutions of higher education to provide administrative support, coordinate administrative responsibilities, share the costs of the task force, and each designate an agency liaison with the task force. The bill requires the task force to consult with those agencies and institutions as necessary to accomplish the task force's responsibilities under the bill's provisions and cooperate as necessary with any other state agency. The bill authorizes the task force to consult with certain private foundations to accomplish the task force's responsibilities under the bill's provisions.

S.B. 1154 requires the task force to review the funding strategies for the task force and develop proposals for expanding the sources of funds available to finance the activities of the task force. The bill authorizes the task force to accept gifts and grants from individuals or private or public

organizations and accept federal and local funds to support the task force. The bill establishes the child abuse reduction task force account as an account in the general revenue fund, and authorizes money in the account to be appropriated only to the task force for the purposes of the bill's provisions. The bill establishes the sources of funds in the account and exempts the account from the application of provisions of law governing the use of dedicated revenue.

S.B. 1154 sets its provisions to expire on September 1, 2013, and provides that the task force is abolished on September 1, 2013.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2011.