

By: Uresti

S.B. No. 1154

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a task force for the development of a strategy to reduce child abuse and neglect and improve child welfare.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 264, Family Code, is amended by adding Subchapter H-1 to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER H-1. TASK FORCE TO REDUCE CHILD ABUSE AND  
NEGLECT AND IMPROVE CHILD WELFARE

Sec. 264.721. ESTABLISHMENT OF TASK FORCE. A task force is established under this subchapter to develop a strategy to reduce child abuse and neglect and improve child welfare.

Sec. 264.722. TASK FORCE. (a) The task force consists of nine members appointed as follows:

(1) seven members appointed by the governor, two of whom must be appointed from a list of candidates submitted by the speaker of the house of representatives; and

(2) two members appointed by the lieutenant governor.

(b) Members of the task force must be individuals who:

(1) are actively involved in the prevention of child abuse and neglect and the improvement of child welfare; and

(2) represent a diversity of backgrounds.

(c) Appointments to the task force shall be made without regard to the race, color, disability, sex, religion, age, or national origin of the appointee.

1       (d) A task force member is not entitled to compensation for  
2 service on the task force but is entitled to reimbursement for  
3 travel expenses as provided by Chapter 660, Government Code, and  
4 the General Appropriations Act.

5       (e) The task force shall elect a presiding officer by a  
6 majority vote of the membership of the task force.

7       (f) The task force shall meet at the call of the presiding  
8 officer.

9       (g) Chapter 2110, Government Code, does not apply to the  
10 task force.

11       Sec. 264.723. TASK FORCE DUTIES. (a) The task force shall  
12 identify:

13               (1) all existing programs in the state relating to  
14 reducing child abuse and neglect or improving child welfare; and

15               (2) the programs described by Subdivision (1) that  
16 receive state money.

17       (b) The task force shall establish a strategy for reducing  
18 child abuse and neglect and for improving child welfare in this  
19 state. In establishing that strategy, the task force shall:

20               (1) gather information concerning child safety, child  
21 abuse and neglect, and child welfare throughout the state;

22               (2) receive reports and testimony from individuals,  
23 state and local agencies, community-based organizations, and other  
24 public and private organizations;

25               (3) create goals for state policy that would improve  
26 child safety, prevent child abuse and neglect, and improve child  
27 welfare;

1           (4) review and revise the strategic plan to accomplish  
2 those goals submitted by a previous task force; and

3           (5) submit the revised strategic plan.

4           (c) The revised strategic plan submitted under Subsection  
5 (b) may include proposals for specific statutory changes, the  
6 creation of new programs, and methods to foster cooperation among  
7 state agencies and between the state and local governments.

8           Sec. 264.724. SUPPORT AGENCY DUTIES. The department, the  
9 Department of State Health Services, the Texas Department of  
10 Criminal Justice, the Texas Youth Commission, the Texas Juvenile  
11 Probation Commission, The University of Texas System, and The Texas  
12 A&M University System shall:

13           (1) provide administrative support services to the  
14 task force;

15           (2) coordinate administrative responsibilities with  
16 the task force to avoid unnecessary duplication of duties;

17           (3) share equally the costs of the task force,  
18 including reimbursement for travel expenses, administrative  
19 expenses, and the costs of publishing the task force's strategic  
20 plan; and

21           (4) each designate a person to serve as the agency  
22 liaison with the task force.

23           Sec. 264.725. CONSULTATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES; PRIVATE  
24 FOUNDATIONS. (a) The task force shall consult with employees of  
25 the department, the Department of State Health Services, the Texas  
26 Department of Criminal Justice, the Texas Youth Commission, the  
27 Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, The University of Texas

1 System, and The Texas A&M University System as necessary to  
2 accomplish the task force's responsibilities under this  
3 subchapter.

4 (b) The task force shall cooperate as necessary with any  
5 other state agency.

6 (c) The task force may consult with private foundations that  
7 have made a substantial commitment to the prevention of child abuse  
8 in this state to accomplish the task force's responsibilities under  
9 this chapter.

10 Sec. 264.726. FUNDING; ACCOUNT. (a) The task force shall  
11 review the funding strategies for the task force and develop  
12 proposals for expanding the sources of funds available to finance  
13 the activities of the task force.

14 (b) The task force may accept gifts and grants from  
15 individuals or private or public organizations and accept federal  
16 and local funds to support the task force.

17 (c) The child abuse reduction task force account is an  
18 account in the general revenue fund. Money in the account may be  
19 appropriated only to the task force for the purposes of this  
20 subchapter. The child abuse reduction task force account is exempt  
21 from the application of Section 403.095, Government Code. The  
22 account consists of:

23 (1) gifts and grants to the task force;

24 (2) money received by the task force from the federal,  
25 state, or local government; and

26 (3) notwithstanding Section 404.071, Government Code,  
27 all interest attributable to money held in the account.

1       Sec. 264.727. SUBMISSION OF PLAN. Not later than December  
2 1, 2012, the task force shall submit the strategic plan required by  
3 Section 264.723 to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker  
4 of the house of representatives.

5       Sec. 264.728. EXPIRATION. The task force is abolished and  
6 this subchapter expires September 1, 2013.

7       SECTION 2. The governor and lieutenant governor shall  
8 appoint the members of the task force as required by Section  
9 264.722, Family Code, as added by this Act, not later than October  
10 1, 2011.

11       SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
12 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
13 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
14 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
15 Act takes effect September 1, 2011.