

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1606
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Economic & Small Business Development
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Texas Workforce Investment Council (council) is a 19-member board that assists the governor and the legislature with strategic planning for and evaluation of the Texas workforce system. Housed in the Office of the Governor, the council includes representatives from business, labor, education, community-based organizations, and related state entities. The council serves as the State Workforce Investment Board, a requirement under the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Additionally, the council provides staff support for the Texas Skill Standards Board, a board created by the legislature to develop a statewide system of skill standards for occupations with strong employment and earnings opportunities, but requiring less than a baccalaureate degree.

The council is subject to the Sunset Act and will be abolished on September 1, 2015, unless continued by the legislature. The Sunset Advisory Commission concluded that the council's functions are needed and that it could easily take on the remaining duties of the Texas Skill Standards Board.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

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

Continues the Texas Workforce Investment Council

H.B. 1606 changes the council's Sunset review date to 2027 to continue the agency for 12 years. The bill requires the council to be reviewed during the period in which the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is reviewed.

Abolishes the Texas Skill Standards Board and transfers its powers and duties to the Texas Workforce Investment Council

H.B. 1606 eliminates the Texas Skill Standards Board (board) from statute, and transfers all powers and duties of the board to the council. The bill requires the council to provide advice to the governor and the legislature on the development of a statewide system of industry-defined and industry-recognized skill standards and credentials for all major skilled occupations that provide strong employment and earnings opportunities in this state and require less than a baccalaureate degree.

The bill requires the council to validate and recognize nationally established skill standards to guide curriculum development, training, assessment, and certification of workforce skills; convene industry groups to develop skill standards and certification procedures for industries and occupations in which standards have not been established or adopted and recognize the skill standards and certification procedures; review the standards developed by other states and foreign countries and enter into agreements for mutual recognition of standards and credentials to enhance portability of skills; and promote the use of standards and credentials among employers.

H.B. 1606 also requires the council to report to the governor on its duties related to the development of skill standards; and provide annual reports on these duties to the governor, the division of workforce development at TWC, and the legislature.

Repealer

H.B. 1606 repeals Subchapter H, Chapter 2308, Government Code, the enabling legislation for the Texas Skill Standards Board.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2015.