

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1706
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AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In 2012, there were 198,366 family violence incidents in Texas, an increase of 11.5 percent from 2011. An innovative tool for fighting domestic violence, the Domestic Violence High Risk Team (DVHRT) network, is a nationally recognized program that prevents domestic violence and domestic homicide by performing risk assessments to predict when a violent or lethal incident is likely to occur.

A Texas-based DVHRT initiative would seek to unite key community players such as law enforcement officers, prosecutors, community supervision and corrections departments, victim advocates, nonprofit organizations that provide services or shelter to victims of family violence, and medical personnel. The team members, each bringing a unique perspective, would work in unison to review cases of domestic violence and to identify, monitor, and contain the most dangerous perpetrators before they can inflict deadly harm.

S.B. 1706 creates a grant program for DVHRT's under the purview of the Office of the Attorney General. Creating a DVHRT network in Texas would build on existing local initiatives while expanding the effort to prevent domestic violence and domestic violence homicide in Texas on a statewide scale.

As proposed, S.B. 1706 amends current law relating to a grant program to fund domestic violence high risk teams.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter B, Chapter 402, Government Code, by adding Section 402.038, as follows:

Sec. 402.038. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HIGH RISK TEAMS GRANT PROGRAM. (a) Provides that a domestic violence high risk team is a multidisciplinary team that coordinates efforts to increase the safety of victims of family violence, as that term is defined by Section 71.004 (Family Violence), Family Code, by monitoring and containing perpetrators while providing victim services. Authorizes the team to be composed of law enforcement officers, prosecutors, community supervision and corrections departments, victim advocates, nonprofit organizations that provide services or shelter to victims of family violence, and medical personnel. Provides that the team members work together to share information and communicate to provide the best possible responses to victims at high risk.

(b) Authorizes the attorney general of the State of Texas (attorney general) using money appropriated for the purpose, to award grants to domestic violence high risk teams in communities in this state.

(c) Requires the attorney general to request proposals for the award of grants under this section. Requires the attorney general to evaluate the proposals and award grants based on the need for domestic violence services in the community in which the team is located and the effectiveness or potential effectiveness of the team.

(c-1) Requires the attorney general, in awarding grants under this section, to prioritize a municipality with a population of more than 1.18 million and located predominantly in a county that has a total area of less than 1,000 square miles. Provides that this subsection expires September 1, 2017.

(d) Authorizes a grant recipient to use grant money received under this section only to fund the activities of a domestic violence high risk team in reducing or preventing incidents of domestic violence and providing domestic violence services to victims.

(e) Requires the attorney general to establish procedures to administer the grant program, including a procedure for the submission of a proposal and a procedure to be used by the attorney general in evaluating a proposal.

(f) Requires the attorney general, to supplement any appropriations for the grant program, to apply for any available federal grant funds for the prevention of domestic violence.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2015.