

By: Phillips

H.B. No. 907

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the authority of a county or municipality to regulate the location of halfway houses; providing a criminal penalty; authorizing fees.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 244, Local Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter C to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER C. HALFWAY HOUSES

Sec. 244.041. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "halfway house" means a residential facility that:

(1) is independently operated by a private entity, including a nonprofit organization;

(2) is not operated under contract with an agency or political subdivision of the state or an agency of the federal government;

(3) is not a chemical dependency treatment facility licensed under Chapter 464, Health and Safety Code; and

(4) is operated for the purpose of housing two or more individuals who are not related by consanguinity or affinity and who have been:

(A) placed on community supervision under Article 42.12, Code of Criminal Procedure;

(B) released on parole or to mandatory supervision under Chapter 508, Government Code; or

1 (C) placed on or released on or to the functional
2 equivalent of community supervision, parole, or mandatory
3 supervision under the laws of another state or federal law.

4 Sec. 244.042. AUTHORITY TO REGULATE. (a) The governing body
5 of a county or municipality, by order or ordinance, may adopt
6 regulations regarding halfway houses as the governing body
7 considers necessary to promote the public health, safety, or
8 welfare.

9 (b) A regulation adopted by a county applies only to the
10 unincorporated area of the county, and a regulation adopted by a
11 municipality applies only to the incorporated area of the
12 municipality.

13 Sec. 244.043. SCOPE OF REGULATION. (a) The location of a
14 halfway house may be:

15 (1) restricted to particular areas; or

16 (2) prohibited within a certain distance of a school,
17 regular place of religious worship, residential neighborhood, or
18 other specified land use the governing body of a county or
19 municipality finds to be inconsistent with the operation of a
20 halfway house.

21 (b) The governing body of a county or municipality may
22 restrict the density of halfway houses.

23 Sec. 244.044. LICENSES OR PERMITS. (a) The governing body
24 of a county or municipality may require that an owner or operator of
25 a halfway house obtain a license or other permit or renew a license
26 or other permit on a periodic basis for the operation of a halfway
27 house. An application for a license or other permit must be made in

1 accordance with the regulations adopted under this subchapter.

2 (b) The regulations adopted under this subchapter may
3 provide for the denial, suspension, or revocation of a license or
4 other permit issued by the county or municipality.

5 (c) A district court has jurisdiction of a suit that arises
6 from the denial, suspension, or revocation of a license or other
7 permit issued by a county or municipality.

8 Sec. 244.045. NOTICE REQUIRED. (a) An applicant for a
9 license or permit issued under Section 244.044 for a location not
10 previously licensed or permitted shall, not later than the 60th day
11 before the date the application is filed:

12 (1) publish in a newspaper of general circulation in
13 the county or municipality a notice of the applicant's intent to
14 establish a halfway house in the county or municipality, as
15 applicable, the name and business address of the applicant, and the
16 proposed location of the halfway house; and

17 (2) prominently post an outdoor sign at the location
18 stating that a halfway house is intended to be located on the
19 premises and providing the name and business address of the
20 applicant.

21 (b) The sign must be at least 24 by 36 inches in size and
22 must be written in lettering at least 2 inches in size. The county
23 or municipality, as applicable, in which the halfway house is to be
24 located may require the sign to be both in English and in a language
25 other than English if it is likely that a substantial number of the
26 residents in the area speak a language other than English as their
27 familiar language.

1 Sec. 244.046. INSPECTION. A county or municipality, as
2 applicable, may inspect a halfway house to determine compliance
3 with this subchapter and regulations adopted under this subchapter.

4 Sec. 244.047. FEES. The governing body of a county or
5 municipality by order may impose fees on applicants for a license or
6 other permit issued under this subchapter or for the renewal of the
7 license or other permit. The fees must be based on the cost of
8 processing the applications and investigating the applicants.

9 Sec. 244.048. ENFORCEMENT. (a) A county or municipality
10 may sue in the district court for an injunction to prohibit the
11 violation of a regulation adopted under this subchapter.

12 (b) A person commits an offense if the person violates a
13 regulation adopted under this subchapter. An offense under this
14 subsection is a Class A misdemeanor.

15 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
16 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
17 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
18 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
19 Act takes effect September 1, 2015.