

By: Naishtat

H.B. No. 2140

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1
2 relating to the creation by the Department of Family and Protective
3 Services of positions and organizations to facilitate the provision
4 of services to foster youth.

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

6 SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 40, Human Resources Code,
7 is amended by adding Sections 40.075 and 40.076 to read as follows:

8 Sec. 40.075. YOUTH SPECIALISTS. (a) The department shall
9 designate an employee in each department region and one employee at
10 the state level to manage and coordinate regional outreach to
11 foster youth and assist the department in developing services,
12 policies, and procedures for foster youth.

13 (b) In addition to the duties described in Subsection (a),
14 each regional-level employee designated by the department under
15 Subsection (a) shall:

16 (1) assist foster youth in understanding the foster
17 children's bill of rights developed under Section 263.008, Family
18 Code, and ensure that the foster children's bill of rights is posted
19 in all facilities for foster youth licensed by the department;

20 (2) administer an annual survey of foster youth 10
21 years of age or older and younger than 23 years of age to collect
22 information related to foster placements and the services provided
23 in foster placements;

24 (3) coordinate and facilitate the operation of the

1 regional youth leadership councils established under Section
2 40.076; and

3 (4) create and coordinate leadership opportunities
4 for foster youth.

5 (c) The department shall include the results of the survey
6 administered under Subsection (b)(2) in the department's annual
7 report.

8 (d) In addition to the duties described in Subsection (a),
9 the state-level employee designated by the department under
10 Subsection (a) shall:

11 (1) oversee the activities of the regional-level
12 employees designated by the department under Subsection (a); and

13 (2) organize and facilitate the operation of the state
14 youth leadership council established under Section 40.076.

15 Sec. 40.076. YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCILS. (a) The department
16 shall establish a youth leadership council in each department
17 region of the state. Each regional youth leadership council shall:

18 (1) be composed of current and former foster youth;
19 and

20 (2) meet monthly to discuss department policies and
21 any other subject the members of the council consider to be
22 appropriate.

23 (b) The department shall establish a state youth leadership
24 council. The state youth leadership council shall:

25 (1) be composed of two members from each regional
26 youth leadership council in the state; and

27 (2) meet quarterly to:

1 (A) collaborate with the department to develop a
2 formal consumer engagement plan, including strategies for engaging
3 youth and young adults in foster care in the development of
4 department programs, policies, and practices;

5 (B) review all changes to department policies and
6 procedures that impact foster youth, before implementation of the
7 changes;

8 (C) compose and deliver a biennial report to the
9 legislature containing:

10 (i) a description of the activities of the
11 regional youth leadership councils;

12 (ii) a briefing on current issues facing
13 foster youth transitioning to independent living;

14 (iii) a summary of relevant data published
15 by the department relating to older foster youth; and

16 (iv) recommendations for improvements to
17 department policies and practices; and

18 (D) perform any other duties that the members of
19 the council believe are necessary or appropriate.

20 (c) The department must seek input from the state youth
21 leadership council before the department implements a change to any
22 policy or procedure that impacts children in foster care.

23 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.