

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of the Advisory Council on Cultural Affairs in the office of the governor.

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

SECTION 1. Subtitle E, Title 4, Government Code, is amended by adding Chapter 470 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 470. ADVISORY COUNCIL ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Sec. 470.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Council" means the Advisory Council on Cultural Affairs.

(2) "State agency" includes an institution of higher education as defined by Section 61.003, Education Code.

Sec. 470.002. ESTABLISHMENT. The Advisory Council on Cultural Affairs is established in the office of the governor to advise the office on furthering the economic, social, legal, and political contributions and equality of the Hispanic population of this state.

Sec. 470.003. COMPOSITION; TERMS. (a) The council is composed of nine members appointed as follows:

(1) one ex officio member of the legislature appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives;

(2) one ex officio member of the legislature appointed by the lieutenant governor; and

(3) seven members appointed by the governor.

1 (b) Members appointed by the speaker of the house and the
2 lieutenant governor serve two-year terms. Members appointed by the
3 governor serve four-year staggered terms, with either three or four
4 members' terms expiring February 1 of each odd-numbered year.

5 (c) In making appointments to the council, the appointing
6 officials shall attempt to achieve geographic representation of the
7 Hispanic population from all areas of the state.

8 (d) The governor shall designate the chair and vice chair of
9 the council from among the members of the council.

10 Sec. 470.004. MEETINGS. The council shall meet at least
11 quarterly each fiscal year. The council may hold meetings by
12 conference call.

13 Sec. 470.005. COMPENSATION. A member of the council is not
14 entitled to compensation or reimbursement of expenses incurred in
15 performing council duties.

16 Sec. 470.006. DUTIES. The council shall:

17 (1) monitor existing programs and legislation
18 designed to meet the needs of the Hispanic population;

19 (2) serve as a liaison between the Hispanic community
20 and the office of the governor and other governmental entities;

21 (3) facilitate meetings with the Hispanic Caucus of
22 the senate, the Mexican American Legislative Caucus of the house of
23 representatives, and the office of the governor to address the
24 legislative needs of the Hispanic population;

25 (4) assist the secretary of state in inviting public
26 and business leaders from Spanish-speaking countries to the state;

27 (5) recommend Hispanics to serve on appointed state

1 boards and commissions;

2 (6) work with the state demographer to assess the
3 demographic indicators and milestones of the Hispanic population;

4 (7) collaborate with business organizations,
5 stakeholders, and the Texas Workforce Commission to review state
6 and local policies that affect business creation and expansion in
7 order to develop policy recommendations for:

8 (A) streamlining or eliminating unnecessary
9 barriers to business creation, retention, and expansion in order to
10 develop greater entrepreneurship opportunities that will benefit
11 the Hispanic population and Hispanic-owned businesses in high-need
12 areas;

13 (B) creating a better business climate to
14 increase job creation, retention, and expansion opportunities for
15 small and Hispanic-owned businesses;

16 (C) assisting in revitalizing the industrial,
17 manufacturing, and high technology sectors of the state's economy
18 to better address the needs of the Hispanic workforce; and

19 (D) strengthening employment opportunities to
20 more effectively increase participation of Hispanics in
21 well-paying jobs and lower the unemployment rate within the
22 Hispanic population;

23 (8) analyze the employment policies and practices of
24 employers in the public and private sectors in order to develop
25 recommendations on improving equal opportunity and treatment for
26 the Hispanic population and other minorities in employment;

27 (9) evaluate the development of methods and

1 initiatives to assure fuller employment options and greater
2 employment opportunities for Hispanics;

3 (10) work with the education community and the private
4 sector to develop appropriate recommendations and initiatives
5 relating to the following goals:

6 (A) retaining Hispanic students in public
7 schools by decreasing the dropout rate;

8 (B) closing the education achievement gap;

9 (C) furthering the accomplishments of Hispanics
10 enrolled in institutions of higher education;

11 (D) increasing work-study, mentorship, and
12 financial assistance for Hispanic students;

13 (E) informing Hispanics about nontraditional
14 education and employment opportunities; and

15 (F) evaluating programs designed to provide
16 equal educational opportunities to the Hispanic population, as
17 mandated by state and federal law;

18 (11) review licensing and regulation requirements in
19 the state in order to:

20 (A) determine the effect of those requirements on
21 the Hispanic population's ability to enter into chosen occupations
22 and to compete in the free market; and

23 (B) develop recommendations to eliminate
24 burdensome licensing requirements that negatively affect job
25 growth and creation within the Hispanic community and other
26 constituencies;

27 (12) work with health and medical experts in the

1 private sector and at institutions of higher education to identify
2 pressing fundamental health concerns of the Hispanic population;

3 (13) address equal treatment of the Hispanic
4 population in the educational, judicial, and health systems by:

5 (A) analyzing the application to the Hispanic
6 population of the laws of this state that govern those systems;

7 (B) monitoring the implementation of laws that
8 affect the legal rights and duties of the Hispanic population; and

9 (C) educating members of the Hispanic population
10 about their legal rights and duties; and

11 (14) study and research any other related matter of
12 importance to the council or the governor.

13 Sec. 470.007. RECOMMENDATIONS. (a) The council shall
14 submit a report of the council's recommendations to the governor,
15 lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives
16 not later than October 1 of each even-numbered year.

17 (b) The council shall include in the report recommendations
18 about:

19 (1) the status and funding of state programs designed
20 to address the needs of the Hispanic population; and

21 (2) reforms, policies, and statutory changes to
22 further the economic, social, legal, and political contributions of
23 Hispanics in the state.

24 Sec. 470.008. EXEMPTION. Chapter 2110 does not apply to the
25 council.

26 Sec. 470.009. ASSISTANCE OF STATE AGENCIES. State agencies
27 and political subdivisions of this state shall cooperate with the

1 council to the greatest extent practicable to fully implement the
2 council's statutory duties.

3 SECTION 2. Not later than October 1, 2015, the speaker of
4 the house of representatives, the lieutenant governor, and the
5 governor shall appoint the members of the Advisory Council on
6 Cultural Affairs established by Chapter 470, Government Code, as
7 added by this Act. In appointing the initial members of the
8 council, the governor shall appoint three persons to terms expiring
9 February 1, 2017, and four to terms expiring February 1, 2019.

10 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
11 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
12 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
13 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
14 Act takes effect September 1, 2015.