

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
85R7898 MM-D

H.B. 1608
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Health & Human Services
5/11/2017
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

With limited positions in the job market for even the brightest youth, young adults must show that they have relevant previous experience in order to find meaningful employment. Many youth gain some of the skills and experience that they need through internships. However, finding an internship is often more difficult for foster youth who live in less stable homes and may have fewer connections to internship opportunities. Studies have shown that foster youth are less likely to finish high school and have more difficulty finding employment after they age out of foster care. Thus, H.B. 1608 creates a pilot program to provide summer internship opportunities to foster youth. Foster youth would be placed with participating businesses, nonprofits, and government agencies. These internships would help foster kids to develop the skills they need for today's workforce.

H.B. 1608 strives to improve opportunities for foster kids by allowing them to gain the skills they need for the workforce once they age out of foster care.

H.B. 1608 amends current law relating to creating a pilot program to provide summer internships for foster children.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission in SECTION 1 (Section 264.1251, Family Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter B, Chapter 264, Family Code, by adding Section 264.1251, as follows:

Sec. 264.1251. SUMMER INTERNSHIP PILOT PROGRAM. (a) Requires the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to establish a summer internship pilot program (pilot program) that provides foster children with the opportunity to develop marketable job skills and obtain professional work experience through a summer internship with a participating business, nonprofit organization, or governmental entity.

(b) Authorizes DFPS to collaborate with other state agencies, as appropriate, to establish the pilot program. Authorizes the pilot program to be implemented in more than one DFPS region.

(c) Authorizes DFPS to enter into an agreement with one or more entities described by Subsection (a) to allow the entity to award internships to children who participate in the pilot program. Authorizes internships provided under the pilot program to be paid or unpaid.

(d) Requires DFPS, not later than April 1 of each year, to select foster children or former foster children who are 15 years of age or older to participate in the pilot program. Requires each child participating in the pilot program to enter into an agreement with the organization awarding the internship and DFPS relating to the terms of the child's internship.

(e) Requires DFPS to complete an evaluation of the pilot program not later than the second anniversary of the date the pilot program begins.

(f) Requires DFPS to submit a report on the evaluation of the pilot program to the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the speaker of the house of representatives. Requires that the report include certain information.

(g) Authorizes the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission to adopt rules necessary to implement this section.

(h) Provides that this section expires September 1, 2021.

SECTION 2. Requires DFPS, not later than January 1, 2018, to establish the pilot program required by Section 264.1251, Family Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2017.