

By: Howard

H.B. No. 278

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of the task force on asylum-seeking children.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 403, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter R to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER R. TASK FORCE ON ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN

Sec. 403.501. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Asylum-seeking child" means a minor fleeing Central America who is seeking asylum in the United States and who has been released into a community in this state by:

(A) the Office of Refugee Resettlement; or

(B) United States Customs and Border Protection or United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, pending an immigration hearing.

(2) "Task force" means the task force on asylum-seeking children.

Sec. 403.502. ESTABLISHMENT; PURPOSES. The task force on asylum-seeking children is established to:

(1) study the humanitarian and fiscal impacts of the presence of asylum-seeking children in this state related to:

(A) public education and school districts; and

(B) the provision of health and human services and child protection; and

1 (2) produce a report outlining the status of
2 asylum-seeking children in this state and distribute that report to
3 state and federal officials.

4 Sec. 403.503. COMPOSITION. The task force is composed of
5 eight members to be appointed by the comptroller as follows:

6 (1) one representative of a faith-based organization
7 providing direct services to asylum-seeking children in this state;

8 (2) one representative of a community-based
9 organization providing direct services to asylum-seeking children
10 in this state;

11 (3) one member who is a superintendent of a school
12 district providing direct services to asylum-seeking children in
13 this state;

14 (4) one representative of a law enforcement agency;

15 (5) one representative of the Texas Education Agency;

16 (6) one representative of the Health and Human
17 Services Commission;

18 (7) one representative of the comptroller; and

19 (8) one representative of a foundation that invests in
20 humanitarian relief efforts for asylum-seeking children in this
21 state.

22 Sec. 403.504. MEETINGS. (a) The task force shall meet in
23 person at least three times each year and may hold additional
24 meetings in person or by conference call if necessary.

25 (b) Section 551.125 applies to a meeting held by conference
26 call under this section, except that Section 551.125(b) does not
27 apply.

1 Sec. 403.505. COMPENSATION. A member of the task force may
2 not receive compensation for service on the task force.

3 Sec. 403.506. REPORT. (a) Using funds available to the
4 task force under Section 403.507, the task force shall partner with
5 an independent third party to produce a report outlining the status
6 of asylum-seeking children in this state.

7 (b) The task force shall submit the report to the governor,
8 lieutenant governor, speaker of the house of representatives, and
9 comptroller. The task force shall also submit the report to the
10 president of the United States, the secretary of the United States
11 Department of Health and Human Services, the secretary of the
12 United States Department of Education, and each member of the Texas
13 delegation to the United States Senate and House of
14 Representatives.

15 Sec. 403.507. GIFTS, GRANTS, AND DONATIONS. The
16 comptroller may accept on behalf of the task force a gift, grant, or
17 donation from any source to carry out the purposes of this
18 subchapter. Notwithstanding any other provision of this
19 subchapter, the comptroller is not required to convene the task
20 force to produce the report if sufficient private gifts, grants, or
21 donations are not available.

22 Sec. 403.508. EXPIRATION. The task force is abolished and
23 this subchapter expires December 31, 2018.

24 SECTION 2. (a) Not later than December 31, 2017, the
25 comptroller of public accounts shall, subject to Section 403.507,
26 Government Code, as added by this Act, convene the task force
27 required under Subchapter R, Chapter 403, Government Code, as added

1 by this Act.

2 (b) If the comptroller of public accounts convenes the task
3 force under Subsection (a) of this section, not later than October
4 1, 2018, the task force shall submit the report required under
5 Subchapter R, Chapter 403, Government Code, as added by this Act.

6 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
7 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
8 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
9 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
10 Act takes effect September 1, 2017.