

AN ACT

relating to the creation of a task force to identify opportunities for academic credit and industry recognition for inmates of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 19, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 19.012 to read as follows:

Sec. 19.012. TASK FORCE ON ACADEMIC CREDIT AND INDUSTRY RECOGNITION. (a) The Windham School District, in consultation with the department, shall establish a task force to review the work or other productive activities in which persons confined or imprisoned in the department engage.

(b) The task force is composed of the following 10 members:

(1) two representatives of the department designated by the executive director of the department;

(2) one representative of the district designated by the superintendent of the district;

(3) one representative of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board designated by the commissioner of higher education;

(4) one representative of the Texas Workforce Commission designated by the executive director of the commission;

(5) one representative of a private vendor operating a correctional facility under a contract with the department,

1 appointed by the governor;

2 (6) three representatives of public junior colleges,
3 as defined by Section 61.003, appointed by the governor, including:

4 (A) at least one representative of a public
5 junior college that provides education services to persons confined
6 or imprisoned in the department; and

7 (B) at least one representative of a public
8 junior college that does not provide services described by
9 Paragraph (A); and

10 (7) one representative of a faith-based organization,
11 appointed by the governor.

12 (c) The governor shall designate a member of the task force
13 to serve as presiding officer.

14 (d) A vacancy on the task force shall be filled in the same
15 manner as the initial appointment.

16 (e) The task force may accept gifts and grants from any
17 source to be used to carry out a function of the task force.

18 (f) The task force shall meet at the call of the presiding
19 officer.

20 (g) The task force shall:

21 (1) conduct an ongoing comprehensive review of the
22 work or other productive activities in which persons confined or
23 imprisoned in the department engage; and

24 (2) identify opportunities for the award of high
25 school credit, college credit, or joint high school and college
26 credit, or the award of an industry-recognized credential or
27 certificate, for engaging in that work or activity.

1 (h) The district, in consultation with the department, the
2 Texas Education Agency, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating
3 Board, and the Texas Workforce Commission, shall for any type of
4 work or productive activity for which an opportunity is identified
5 under Subsection (g), determine the actions necessary for obtaining
6 the award of the applicable academic credit or industry
7 recognition.

8 (i) Not later than September 1, 2021, the task force shall
9 submit to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the
10 house of representatives, and the standing committees of the
11 legislature having jurisdiction over the department a report that
12 summarizes the review conducted under Subsection (g) and the
13 district's actions with regard to obtaining the award of academic
14 credit or industry recognition under Subsection (h). The district
15 shall provide the task force with any information necessary to
16 complete the report.

17 (j) This section expires December 1, 2021.

18 SECTION 2. Not later than December 1, 2017, the executive
19 director of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the
20 superintendent of the Windham School District, the commissioner of
21 higher education, the executive director of the Texas Workforce
22 Commission, and the governor shall appoint members to the task
23 force established by Section 19.012, Education Code, as added by
24 this Act, in the manner required by Subsection (b) of that section.

25 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 553 was passed by the House on May 6, 2017, by the following vote: Yeas 142, Nays 0, 2 present, not voting; and that the House concurred in Senate amendments to H.B. No. 553 on May 26, 2017, by the following vote: Yeas 142, Nays 0, 2 present, not voting.

Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 553 was passed by the Senate, with amendments, on May 24, 2017, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: _____

Date

Governor