

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 3616
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Homeland Security & Public Safety
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been reported that faith-based organizations spent more than \$200 million and provided more than 500,000 hours of manpower in efforts to aid in the response to and recovery from Hurricane Harvey. However, it has been suggested that emergency management systems sometimes struggle with knowing exactly how to best integrate these organizations in disaster response efforts. C.S.H.B. 3616 seeks to create a task force of faith-based organizations to study and find solutions to this issue.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 3616 amends the Government Code to establish the task force on faith-based disaster response to assist the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) by studying the participation of faith-based organizations in disaster response. The bill sets out provisions relating to the composition of the task force, provides for its administration and operation, and requires the chief of TDEM to appoint members not later than October 1, 2019. The bill requires TDEM to provide administrative support to the task force. The bill requires the task force to do the following:

- develop and implement a plan for improving data collection regarding faith-based organizations that participate in disaster response;
- develop best practices for communicating, cooperating, and collaborating with faith-based organizations to strengthen disaster response in Texas;
- identify and address inefficiencies in disaster response provided by the state and faith-based organizations; and
- identify and address gaps in state services that could be provided by faith-based organizations.

C.S.H.B. 3616 requires the task force to submit a report of the task force's activities and any recommendations for legislative or other action to the legislature and governor not later than December 1, 2020. The bill authorizes the task force to solicit and accept gifts and grants from any source to be used to carry out a function of the task force. The task force is abolished and the bill's provisions expire September 1, 2021.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2019.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 3616 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute changes the purpose for which the task force is established from assisting TDEM in fulfilling certain duties to assisting TDEM by studying the participation of faith-based organizations in disaster response.

The substitute does not include an authorization for the task force to administer gifts, grants, and donations or an authorization for the task force to solicit and accept donations. The substitute clarifies that gifts and grants accepted by the task force are to be used to carry out a function of the task force.

The substitute clarifies that the task force is abolished September 1, 2021.