

By: Walle

H.B. No. 4479

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of a grant program and task force relating to disaster issues affecting persons who are elderly and persons with disabilities.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 418, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter F-1 to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER F-1. DISASTER ISSUES AFFECTING PERSONS WHO ARE ELDERLY AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Sec. 418.131. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Disability" means, with respect to an individual, a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits at least one major life activity of that individual.

(2) "Task force" means the task force established under Section 418.132.

Sec. 418.132. ESTABLISHMENT; PURPOSE. The task force on disaster issues affecting persons who are elderly and persons with disabilities is established to:

(1) administer the grant program under Section 418.134; and

(2) study methods to more effectively:

(A) assist persons who are elderly and persons with disabilities during a disaster or emergency evacuation; and

(B) accommodate persons who are elderly and

1 persons with disabilities in emergency shelters.

2 Sec. 418.133. COMPOSITION. (a) The task force is composed
3 of 11 members appointed by the governor, including:

4 (1) three members who are first responders;

5 (2) one member who represents municipalities;

6 (3) one member who represents counties; and

7 (4) six members who represent persons with
8 disabilities, including one who represents persons who are blind,
9 one who represents persons who are deaf, and one selected from a
10 list provided by ADAPT of Texas.

11 (b) A majority of the members appointed to the task force
12 must be persons with disabilities or guardians of children with
13 disabilities.

14 (c) Members serve staggered six-year terms with the terms of
15 three or four members expiring February 1 of each odd-numbered
16 year.

17 (d) The governor shall designate one member of the task
18 force to serve as the presiding officer of the task force. The
19 presiding officer serves in that capacity at the pleasure of the
20 governor.

21 Sec. 418.134. GRANT PROGRAM. (a) From funds appropriated
22 for the purpose and gifts, grants, and donations accepted for the
23 purpose, the division shall award grants as provided by this
24 subchapter to provide financial support for:

25 (1) activities that include persons who are elderly
26 and persons with disabilities in the preparation for, response to,
27 recovery from, and mitigation of disasters;

1 (2) strategies and procedures that implement
2 community-level practices that decrease deaths, injuries, and harm
3 resulting from disasters to persons who are elderly and persons
4 with disabilities;

5 (3) the development of state and local policies that
6 reinforce and promote the inclusion of persons who are elderly and
7 persons with disabilities in community preparation for disasters;
8 and

9 (4) research related to disasters and persons who are
10 elderly and persons with disabilities.

11 (b) The task force shall review grant proposals and
12 recommend grant recipients to the division. The division shall
13 award grants based on those recommendations.

14 (c) The division shall establish procedures to administer
15 the grant program, including a procedure for the submission of a
16 proposal.

17 (d) The division shall enter into a contract with each grant
18 recipient that includes performance requirements. The division
19 shall monitor and enforce the terms of the contract. The contract
20 must authorize the division to recoup grant money from a grant
21 recipient for failure of the grant recipient to comply with the
22 terms of the contract.

23 (e) The division may solicit and accept gifts, grants, and
24 donations from any source for the purpose of awarding grants under
25 this section.

26 Sec. 418.135. TASK FORCE STUDY. (a) The task force shall
27 study methods to more effectively accommodate persons who are

1 elderly and persons with disabilities during a disaster or
2 emergency evacuation. The study must examine and make
3 recommendations on:

4 (1) the provision of informational materials to
5 persons who are elderly and persons with disabilities before a
6 disaster occurs on disaster or emergency evacuation;

7 (2) the accessibility of transportation and medical
8 supplies to persons who are elderly and persons with disabilities
9 during a disaster;

10 (3) different solutions for accommodating persons who
11 are elderly and persons with disabilities during a disaster or
12 emergency evacuation of a rural or urban area;

13 (4) the ability to effectively communicate with
14 persons who are elderly and persons with disabilities during a
15 disaster; and

16 (5) the availability of volunteers to assist persons
17 who are elderly and persons with disabilities during an emergency
18 evacuation.

19 (b) The task force shall develop and submit a written report
20 of the study and recommendations developed by the task force to the
21 governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of
22 representatives, and each member of the legislature not later than
23 December 1, 2020.

24 (c) This section expires June 1, 2021.

25 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2019.