

By: Watson

S.B. No. 951

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1
2 relating to the establishment of the family first prevention
3 services task force.

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

5 SECTION 1. (a) In this section, "task force" means the
6 family first prevention services task force established under this
7 section.

8 (b) The family first prevention services task force is
9 established for the purpose of assessing the readiness of this
10 state in implementing Title VII, Div. E, Pub. L. No. 115-123 by
11 2021.

12 (c) The task force is composed of at least 19 members
13 appointed by the commissioner of the Department of Family and
14 Protective Services as follows:

15 (1) the commissioner of family and protective
16 services;

17 (2) the assistant commissioner of child protective
18 services;

19 (3) the assistant commissioner of prevention and early
20 intervention services;

21 (4) the medical director of the department;

22 (5) a representative from a single source continuum
23 contractor;

24 (6) a representative of a child-placing agency in this

1 state with experience in managing a residential treatment center;

2 (7) a representative of court-appointed volunteer
3 advocates;

4 (8) a judge of a court that hears suits affecting the
5 parent-child relationship;

6 (9) an attorney ad litem with experience in
7 court-ordered representation of children and youth in the
8 conservatorship of the department;

9 (10) an advocate for foster children and youth who is
10 not employed by or under contract with the department;

11 (11) a representative of the legislature;

12 (12) a representative of the Legislative Budget Board;

13 (13) a representative of the office of the comptroller
14 of public accounts;

15 (14) three advocates who are not employed by or under
16 contract with the department and who advocate for providing
17 services to families at risk of entering the foster care system,
18 including an advocate for the substance abuse treatment community,
19 an advocate for the mental health treatment community, and an
20 advocate with experience in providing services to pregnant and
21 parenting youth;

22 (15) an advocate with experience as a foster child;

23 (16) an advocate with experience as a parent in the
24 foster care system;

25 (17) an advocate with experience as a kinship
26 caregiver; and

27 (18) any other member of the department's executive

1 staff the commissioner considers necessary.

2 (d) The commissioner of family and protective services
3 serves as the presiding officer of the task force.

4 (e) A vacancy for an appointed member of the task force is
5 filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

6 (f) The task force shall meet at least quarterly at the call
7 of the presiding officer. The task force shall meet at other times
8 as determined by the presiding officer.

9 (g) The task force shall:

10 (1) evaluate and make recommendations on matters
11 related to the task force's purpose as described by Subsection (b)
12 of this section, including:

13 (A) the transformation of the placement of foster
14 children and youth from residential treatment centers to qualified
15 residential treatment providers and the process for certifying an
16 unaccredited residential treatment center;

17 (B) the total capacity of all foster care
18 placements in this state;

19 (C) the foster care prevention and early
20 intervention strategies currently available in this state;

21 (D) any issue that may arise in a suit affecting
22 the parent-child relationship for a child or youth in the
23 conservatorship of the department;

24 (E) any issue relating to families entering the
25 child protective services system; and

26 (F) methods for using federal and state money to
27 allow a greater number of children and youth to remain in their

1 homes while addressing safety concerns for the children and youth;
2 and

3 (2) examine the costs to this state and the private
4 sector and other issues related to the use of federal money
5 allocated or transferred under Title VII, Div. E, Pub. L. No.
6 115-123.

7 (h) The Department of Family and Protective Services shall
8 provide reasonably necessary administrative and technical support
9 to the task force.

10 (i) The task force shall prepare a written report that
11 includes:

12 (1) a description of the activities of the task force;

13 (2) the findings and recommendations of the task
14 force; and

15 (3) proposed legislation, recommendations, or
16 information on any other relevant matter that the task force
17 considers appropriate.

18 (j) Not later than January 1, 2021, the task force shall
19 submit the report described by Subsection (i) of this section to the
20 governor, the lieutenant governor, and each member of the
21 legislature.

22 (k) The task force is abolished and this section expires
23 June 1, 2021.

24 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
25 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
26 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
27 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this

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1 Act takes effect September 1, 2019.