

By: Meza

H.B. No. 2514

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a task force to study access to legal services for persons with disabilities.

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

SECTION 1. TASK FORCE. (a) In this section:

(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) "Executive commissioner" means the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission.

(3) "Task force" means the task force established by this section.

(b) The executive commissioner shall establish a task force to study access to legal services for persons with disabilities.

(c) The task force shall be composed of seven members as follows:

(1) five members appointed by the executive commissioner, including:

(A) at least two members who are adults with disabilities; and

(B) at least two members who are parents of children with disabilities; and

(2) two members who represent Disability Rights Texas.

(d) The executive commissioner shall designate a member as

1 the presiding officer of the task force.

2 (e) The task force shall meet at least quarterly at the call
3 of the presiding officer and at other times determined by the
4 presiding officer.

5 (f) The task force shall study access to legal services for
6 persons with disabilities. The study must examine and make
7 recommendations regarding:

8 (1) the availability of legal representation for
9 persons with disabilities;

10 (2) the availability of advocacy and legal services
11 for persons with disabilities; and

12 (3) the barriers to accessing legal services for
13 persons with disabilities, including communication, financial,
14 medical, and cognitive barriers.

15 (g) The task force shall develop and submit a written report
16 of the study and recommendations developed by the task force to the
17 Health and Human Services Commission, the governor, the lieutenant
18 governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and each
19 member of the legislature not later than December 1, 2022.

20 (h) The task force may develop instructional and training
21 materials for legal professionals and persons with disabilities
22 relating to legal issues affecting persons with disabilities.

23 (i) The task force may partner with or seek and accept
24 assistance from voluntary organizations active in supporting
25 persons with disabilities.

26 (j) The task force is abolished and this Act expires June 1,
27 2023.

1 SECTION 2. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act takes effect
2 immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members
3 elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas
4 Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for
5 immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2021.