

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 915
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International Relations & Economic Development
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In February 2022, Veronica Sanchez was murdered by a coworker upon the completion of her shift. Prior to her death, Ms. Sanchez had notified management that the same coworker had been making her feel uncomfortable. However, the coworker's behavior prior to the murder had not been deemed serious enough to involve law enforcement. H.B. 915 seeks to allow for local law enforcement to be notified of workplace violence even when there is not an immediate emergency by establishing a 24-hour toll-free workplace violence hotline. This will give law enforcement the opportunity to respond in a timely manner or build a proper case for situations of workplace violence or harassment.

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 rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Workforce Commission in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 915 amends the Occupations Code to require the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) to establish not later than February 1, 2024, and maintain a 24-hour toll-free telephone service in English and Spanish for reports of workplace violence in Texas. The bill requires that a report of workplace violence made to the hotline be referred to the appropriate local or state law enforcement agency for investigation. The bill requires TDLR to make an audio recording of each call received by the hotline and to retain the recording until the second anniversary of the date of receiving the call. The bill authorizes reports made to the hotline to be made anonymously. The bill defines "workplace violence" for purposes of the hotline as any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the worksite.

H.B. 915 amends the Labor Code to require each employer to post a notice to employees of the workplace violence hotline. The notice must be posted as follows:

- in a conspicuous place in the employer's place of business;
- in sufficient locations to be convenient to all employees; and
- in English and Spanish, as appropriate.

The bill requires the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), by rule and in consultation with TDLR, to prescribe the form and content of the notice. The bill requires TWC to adopt the rules not later than March 1, 2024, and provides that the rules must require the notice to contain the hotline telephone number and inform employees of the right to make a report to the hotline anonymously.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.