

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 3501  
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Public Health  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Human traffickers often tattoo their name or nickname or another distinctive symbol or sequence of letters on their trafficking victims. This is done to indicate that the victims are their "property." Most of the time, victims are coerced into getting these tattoos. The tattoos also enable traffickers to keep track of their victims if they are trafficking a large number of them. Texas consistently ranks high in comparison to other states with regard to the number of reported human trafficking cases, and there is more that we can do to help victims of this horrific crime.

Great strides have been made over the years in Texas to put an end to all forms of human trafficking, including campaigns that help citizens identify trafficking victims. While we have increased training for certain professions to be able identify and save victims, there are some professions that have close proximity to victims, whether knowingly or unknowingly, but that do not have any training on this crime, such as tattoo artists and body piercers. Workers in these professions need to be able to recognize if someone who comes to their studio is the victim of human trafficking and need to have the resources and information necessary to report such a crime. H.B. 3501 seeks to address this issue by requiring each employee of a tattoo studio or body piercing studio to complete an approved training course on identifying and assisting victims of human trafficking.

### **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 executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission in SECTION 1 of this bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

H.B. 3501 amends the Health and Safety Code to require each employee of a tattoo studio or body piercing studio to complete a training course approved by the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission on identifying and assisting victims of human trafficking within the time prescribed by rules adopted by the executive commissioner. The bill specifies that an employee is not required to complete the training before January 1, 2024. The bill requires the executive commissioner, as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date, to approve human trafficking prevention training courses, including at least one course that is available without charge, and to adopt rules as necessary to implement the bill. The bill requires the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to post the list of approved training courses on its website as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date.

H.B. 3501 requires DSHS to develop and post on its website a poster with information on recognizing potential human trafficking victims and methods for assisting such victims as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date. A licensed tattoo or body piercing studio must display the poster in an area of the studio regularly accessible to the studio's employees but is not required to do so before January 1, 2024.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2023.