88R12728 MCF-D

By:  Bryant H.B. No. 3427

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the ombudsman office for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

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

SECTION 1.  Chapter 493, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 493.0165 to read as follows:

Sec. 493.0165.  OMBUDSMAN OFFICE; REPORT. (a) The department shall establish an ombudsman office to assist the department in performing its duties under Section 493.016.

(b)  The ombudsman office shall:

(1)  establish a process by which an employee of the department may anonymously submit a complaint regarding:

(A)  the department;

(B)  an inmate;

(C)  another employee; or

(D)  a facility operated by or under contract with the department;

(2)  investigate complaints submitted under Subdivision (1); and

(3)  refer complaints submitted under Subdivision (1) involving criminal conduct to the appropriate agency for investigation.

(c)  The identity of an employee who submits a complaint under Subsection (b) must remain anonymous unless the employee chooses to disclose the employee's identity.

(d)  Not later than December 1 of each even-numbered year, the ombudsman office shall prepare and publish on the department's Internet website a report that includes:

(1)  the number of complaints submitted under Subsection (b) during the two-year period preceding the date of the report;

(2)  a summary of any trends regarding the complaints; and

(3)  a description of the actions taken in response to the complaints.

(e)  The report described by Subsection (d) may not include identifying information about any person involved in a complaint.

SECTION 2.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.