

By: Campos, Bernal

H.B. No. 834

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT  
2 relating to the establishment by the Texas Department of Housing  
3 and Community Affairs of a pilot program to solicit donations made  
4 by text message for the benefit of local programs that provide  
5 services to homeless individuals and families in certain  
6 municipalities.

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

8 SECTION 1. Subchapter K, Chapter 2306, Government Code, is  
9 amended by adding Section 2306.2582 to read as follows:

10 Sec. 2306.2582. HOMELESS "TEXT-TO-DONATE" PILOT PROGRAM.

11 (a) The department may implement and administer a pilot program to  
12 solicit donations made by text message for the benefit of local  
13 programs that provide services to homeless individuals and families  
14 in municipalities with a population of 285,000 or more. If  
15 implemented, the program shall:

16 (1) facilitate the process by which a person may use  
17 text messaging to make a private donation to help homeless  
18 individuals and families;

19 (2) encourage private donations to be made for the  
20 benefit of local programs that prevent and eliminate homelessness;  
21 and

22 (3) fund local programs that provide emergency housing  
23 and transportation to homeless individuals and families.

24 (b) The department may adopt rules to govern the

1 implementation and administration of the program, including rules  
2 that:

3 (1) provide for the designation of a  
4 telecommunications carrier and text messaging service used for the  
5 program;

6 (2) facilitate the acquisition of a statewide phone  
7 number and donation code;

8 (3) provide the ability for an individual to make a  
9 donation by text message in an amount chosen by the individual, to  
10 charge the donation to the individual's phone bill or credit card,  
11 and to select the municipality that will benefit from the donation;

12 (4) protect the confidentiality of donor information;

13 (5) establish a fund in the department to receive and  
14 disburse money under the program;

15 (6) facilitate the coordination with municipalities  
16 for the disbursement of money received under the program;

17 (7) establish qualifications for local organizations  
18 to request and receive donations made through the program; and

19 (8) facilitate the promotion of the program to the  
20 general public including the placement of signage in areas of a  
21 municipality that may be impacted by large populations of homeless  
22 persons.

23 (c) Of the money donated under the program, the department  
24 shall allocate:

25 (1) not less than 65 percent for costs associated with  
26 housing homeless individuals and families;

27 (2) not less than 20 percent for transportation costs;

1           (3) not less than five percent for the promotion of the  
2 program; and

3           (4) not more than 10 percent for overhead and  
4 administrative costs.

5           (d) The department may assign personnel to coordinate the  
6 administration and implementation of the program.

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