

By: Lujan

H.B. No. 2645

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to a pilot program to increase the financial independence of foster youth who are transitioning to independent living.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 264, Family Code, is amended by adding Section 264.1215 to read as follows:

Sec. 264.1215. PILOT PROGRAM FOR FINANCIAL TRANSITIONAL LIVING SERVICES. (a) The department shall establish a pilot program to assist foster youth to achieve financial security and independence as the youth transition to independent living.

(b) The department shall enter into an agreement with one or more credit unions or other financial institutions to establish savings and checking accounts for foster youth who, under an agreement with the department and credit union or other financial institution, participate in the pilot program. The agreement may include, as appropriate, a requirement that the department and the credit union or other financial institution together encourage the foster youth participating in the program to open private savings and checking accounts once the participants are no longer eligible for foster care services.

(c) The department shall include foster youth, including foster youth who are age 17 and older, as participants in the pilot program established under this section.

(d) The department shall complete an evaluation of the pilot

1 program and shall submit a report on the evaluation of the pilot
2 program conducted under this subsection to the governor, lieutenant
3 governor, and speaker of the house of representatives not later
4 than December 31, 2026.

5 (e) A foster youth may not be denied the rights granted
6 under Section 264.0111 to control money earned by the youth that is
7 deposited into savings and checking accounts under the pilot
8 program.

9 (f) If the department is unable to enter into an agreement
10 with a credit union or other financial institution, the department
11 shall include in the report under Subsection (d) a description of
12 any legal or practical barriers that must be addressed to ensure
13 that foster youth are able to participate in the pilot program and
14 establish savings and checking accounts before the youth leave
15 foster care.

16 SECTION 2. As soon as practicable after the effective date
17 of this Act, the Department of Family and Protective Services shall
18 establish the pilot program as required by Section 264.1215, Family
19 Code, as added by this Act.

20 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.