

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
89R11172 AMF-F

H.B. 451  
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Health & Human Services  
4/25/2025  
Engrossed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

The issue of human trafficking remains pervasive in Texas, often disproportionately affecting children within the care of the state foster care system or juvenile justice system. Children in these systems are at a higher risk of becoming victims of human trafficking due to previous abuse, neglect, and other traumas. This instability leaves them vulnerable and more easily manipulated by traffickers.

While the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) currently screen the children in their custody considered the most at-risk, not screening all of these children may lead to some falling through the cracks and not being identified, leaving them unable to access appropriate services. Resources exist to provide the necessary support and services for these children while they are in the state's care, but they need to be identified first. By equipping these agencies to better identify children who are at risk or are victims of human trafficking, these children can access the proper supports and services so that victimized children can begin the journey of healing, and at-risk children will be less likely to be victimized by receiving early access to preventative services.

H.B. 451 expands the utilization of screening for risks or signs of commercial sexual exploitation to all children who are in the conservatorship of DFPS or under the jurisdiction of TJJD.

H.B. 451 amends current law relating to a screening for the risk of commercial sexual exploitation of certain children.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Section 266.012(a), Family Code, as follows:

(a) Requires a child, not later than the 45th day after the date a child enters the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), to receive certain evaluations, including a screening for risk of commercial sexual exploitation using a validated, evidence-informed tool selected by the Child Sex Trafficking Prevention Unit established under Section 772.0062 (Child Sex Trafficking Prevention Unit), Government Code, if validation guidelines based on the child's age indicate the screening is appropriate or concerns of commercial sexual exploitation exist. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 221.003(b), Human Resources Code, to require that the risk and needs assessment required to be completed by a juvenile probation department for each child include a screening for risk of commercial sexual exploitation using a validated, evidence-informed tool selected by the Child Sex Trafficking Prevention Unit established under Section 772.0062, Government Code.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2025.