

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 3284
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Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The bill author has informed the committee that, while some may not believe that it is the role of government to help encourage family stability, there is a benefit in studying strategies for promoting strong marriages and healthy families because, for thousands of years, the family has been the most significant building block of society. H.B. 3284 seeks to aid in developing those strategies by establishing the Texas Commission on Marriage and Family, with members appointed by the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house, to study and issue a report on developing strategies to promote marriage and family formation, as well as identifying laws, rules, and policies that may discourage Texans from marrying and raising children.

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

ANALYSIS

H.B. 3284 creates the Texas Commission on Marriage and Family to study and develop strategies for promoting strong marriages and healthy families and to make recommendations to the legislature to advance the goal of creating an environment in Texas that is favorable for marriage and raising children. The bill includes legislative findings regarding the following:

- the state's best interests to promote lasting marriage and the practice of raising children in stable, two-parent households;
- promotion of evidence-based pathways to support strong and healthy family connections by reducing barriers that prevent Texans from marrying and raising children;
- certain state laws, rules, and policies that may discourage the positive and desirable ends of marriage and family formation; and
- the necessity to convene a commission to:
 - study and develop strategies to promote strong marriages and healthy families; and
 - identify state laws, rules, and policies that discourage Texans from marrying and raising children.

H.B. 3284 provides the following with respect to the commission's composition:

- the commission is composed of seven members as follows:
 - three members appointed by the governor;
 - two members appointed by the lieutenant governor; and
 - two members appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives;

- in making those appointments, an appointing authority must ensure the commission is composed of members with a background and demonstrated expertise in marriage and family formation, including the following:
 - child and family counselors;
 - child development experts;
 - community-based nonprofit organization leaders who work to promote healthy marriages and parenting;
 - published researchers in the subjects of marriage, parenting, and the benefits of strong and stable families in society; and
 - members of the clergy; and
- the governor must appoint one member of the commission to serve as the commission's presiding officer.

H.B. 3284 requires the commission to meet at the call of the commission's presiding officer, authorizes a meeting conducted under these provisions to be held in person, by telephone, or by other means of communication, and requires all commission meetings to be open to the public. A commission member serves without compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred in performing official duties. The bill requires the Health and Human Services Commission to provide administrative support services at the request of the Texas Commission on Marriage and Family, including the provision of meeting space and assistance in drafting and compiling the report required under the bill's provisions.

H.B. 3284 requires the commission to do the following:

- evaluate existing state laws, rules, and policies and identify those that discourage Texans from marrying and raising children;
- assess the effectiveness of the following:
 - state-funded premarital education programs and other initiatives promoting marriage; and
 - state-funded programs in encouraging family formation and helping parents develop and apply successful parenting skills and techniques; and
- make recommendations to the legislature regarding the following:
 - necessary changes to state laws, rules, and policies that are identified as being detrimental to the promotion of lasting marriages, family formation, and child rearing; and
 - policies, programs, and strategies to support and increase the formation of strong, lasting marriages and healthy family connections and to reduce the incidence of divorce and family dissolution.

H.B. 3284 requires the appropriate appointing authority to appoint the commission's members as required by the bill's provisions not later than the 60th day after the bill's effective date. The bill requires the commission to submit to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and each member of the legislature a written report that includes a summary of the commission's findings and any legislative recommendations not later than November 1, 2026. The commission is abolished and the bill's provisions expire December 31, 2026.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2025.