

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
89R20805 AJZ-F

C.S.S.B. 1620
By: Huffman
Finance
3/31/2025
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

S.B. 1620 directs the Office of Court Administration (OCA) to establish the Texas Forensic Analyst Apprenticeship Pilot Program to address the growing need for forensic science professionals in the state and to collaborate with the Texas Forensic Science Commission (FSC) to administer the program. To implement the program, OCA will contract with certain institutions of higher education to create unified forensic training programs. Additionally, OCA will contract with publicly-funded accredited crime labs awarded an apprentice position by FSC. This initiative is scheduled to expire on September 1, 2030.

(Original Author's/Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

C.S.S.B. 1620 amends current law relating to the establishment of the Texas forensic analyst apprenticeship pilot program.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Forensic Science Commission in SECTION 1 (Section 72.203, Government Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 72, Government Code, by adding Subchapter H, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER H. TEXAS FORENSIC ANALYST APPRENTICESHIP PILOT PROGRAM

Sec. 72.201. DEFINITIONS. Defines "accredited crime laboratory," "commission," and "pilot program."

Sec. 72.202. TEXAS FORENSIC ANALYST APPRENTICESHIP PILOT PROGRAM. (a) Requires the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System (OCA) to establish the Texas forensic analyst apprenticeship pilot program to increase the forensic science workforce capacity in this state. Requires OCA to collaborate with the Texas Forensic Science Commission (FSC) as necessary to administer the pilot program.

(b) Requires OCA, to implement the pilot program, to enter into contracts with:

- (1) general academic teaching institutions, as defined by Section 61.003 (Definitions), Education Code, that provide relevant training programs in forensic disciplines; and
- (2) each publicly funded accredited crime laboratory that is awarded an apprentice position by FSC under Section 72.203.

Sec. 72.203. FORENSIC ANALYST APPRENTICE POSITIONS; RULES. (a) Requires FSC by rule, in consultation with OCA, to adopt eligibility requirements for individuals who are authorized to apply for an apprentice position under the pilot program and

publicly funded accredited crime laboratories that are authorized to apply to sponsor an apprentice under the pilot program.

(b) Requires FSC, in establishing the eligibility requirements under Subsection (a), to prioritize the long-term retention of forensic analysts in accredited crime laboratories in this state.

(c) Requires FSC to award apprentice positions to individuals and accredited crime laboratories that meet the eligibility requirements established under Subsection (a). Requires FSC to enter into contracts with the laboratories selected to sponsor apprentices under the pilot program.

(d) Requires FSC to consult with the Texas Association of Crime Lab Directors to determine the current need for forensic analyst apprentices in each forensic discipline.

Sec. 72.204. EXPIRATION. Provides that this subchapter expires September 1, 2030.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2025.