

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 2776
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Criminal Justice
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Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

S.B. 2776 removes legal barriers preventing the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) from fully utilizing its Credible Messengers program, which brings formerly incarcerated youth back to mentor current offenders. Current law restricts TJJD from disclosing personal information about participants, limiting their ability to participate in the program.

S.B. 2776 amends Section 244.003 of the Human Resources Code to allow TJJD to disclose information about individuals who are 18 years or older, have been discharged, and have given voluntary consent. This ensures that participation in the program remains voluntary while enabling TJJD to facilitate mentorship.

S.B. 2776 expands the Credible Messengers program, which has proven effective in motivating incarcerated youth by providing relatable role models. Support is expected from juvenile justice advocates and rehabilitation organizations, while privacy concerns may be raised, though the voluntary consent provision addresses these.

S.B. 2776 enhances the program's impact by removing barriers to participation, helping TJJD better serve its youth population.

S.B. 2776 amends current law relating to the disclosure of certain information by the Texas Juvenile Justice Department.

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 244.003, Human Resources Code, by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (c), as follows:

(b) Provides that, except as provided by Section 243.051(c) (relating to authorizing the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) to disseminate to the public certain information), records of examination and treatment and all other information concerning a child, including personally identifiable information, are not public and are available only according to certain provisions of the Human Resources Code, the Family Code, and the Code of Criminal Procedure, including Subsection (c) of Section 244.003 (Records of Examinations and Treatment).

(c) Authorizes TJJD to disclose information concerning a person who was committed to TJJD, including personally identifiable information, if:

(1) the person has been discharged from commitment by TJJD, is at least 18 years of age, and has given consent for TJJD to disclose the information; and

(2) TJJD does not disclose any information for which the person did not consent to disclosure and does not disclose any information for a purpose other than the purpose for which the person consented to disclosure.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2025.