

By: Morales of Harris

H.B. No. 231

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT
2 relating to a study on food deserts and their disproportionate
3 impact among communities of color.

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

5 SECTION 1. (a) In this section:

6 (1) "Department" means the Department of State Health
7 Services.

8 (2) "Food desert" means a geographic area in this
9 state the department determines is an area with limited access to
10 healthy and nutritious food.

11 (b) The department, in collaboration with any appropriate
12 state agency, shall conduct a study on food deserts and any
13 disproportionate impact food deserts have on communities of color.
14 In conducting the study, the department shall:

15 (1) investigate the causes of food deserts;
16 (2) investigate the health effects of food deserts;
17 (3) investigate the financial impact of food deserts;
18 (4) compare access to healthy and nutritious food
19 related to an individual's:

20 (A) age;

21 (B) race and ethnicity; and

22 (C) socioeconomic background; and

23 (5) investigate the origins of any disproportionate
24 impact food deserts have on communities of color.

1 (c) Based on the results of the study conducted under this
2 section, the department shall develop recommendations for
3 legislative and other action to:

4 (1) address disparities in food access among
5 communities of color; and

6 (2) increase access to healthy and nutritious food.

7 (d) Not later than September 1, 2026, the department shall
8 prepare and submit to each standing committee of the legislature
9 with primary jurisdiction over the Department of State Health
10 Services a written report summarizing the results of the study and
11 including the recommendations developed under this section.

12 (e) This Act expires September 1, 2027.

13 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.