

By: Bonnen

H.B. No. 5293

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of the Texas forensic analyst apprenticeship pilot program.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 72, Government Code, is amended by adding Subchapter H to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER H. TEXAS FORENSIC ANALYST APPRENTICESHIP PILOT PROGRAM

Sec. 72.201. DEFINITIONS. In this subchapter:

(1) "Accredited crime laboratory" means a crime laboratory, as that term is defined by Article 38.35, Code of Criminal Procedure, that has been accredited under Article 38.01 of that code.

(2) "Commission" means the Texas Forensic Science Commission.

(3) "Pilot program" means the Texas forensic analyst apprenticeship pilot program established under this subchapter.

Sec. 72.202. TEXAS FORENSIC ANALYST APPRENTICESHIP PILOT PROGRAM. (a) The office shall establish the Texas forensic analyst apprenticeship pilot program to increase the forensic science workforce capacity in this state. The office shall collaborate with the commission as necessary to administer the pilot program.

(b) To implement the pilot program, the office shall enter into contracts with:

(1) the Center for Human Identification at the

University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth for the purpose of creating a unified forensic biology (DNA) training program;

(2) the Institute for Forensic Research, Training, and Innovation at Sam Houston State University for the purpose of creating a unified drug chemistry and toxicology training program;

(3) the Department of Statistics at Texas A&M University for the purpose of creating a unified firearms comparison training program; and

(4) each publicly funded accredited crime laboratory that is awarded an apprentice position by the commission under Section 72.203.

Sec. 72.203. FORENSIC ANALYST APPRENTICE POSITIONS; RULES.

(a) In consultation with the office, the commission by rule shall adopt eligibility requirements for:

(1) individuals who may apply for an apprentice position under the pilot program; and

(2) publicly funded accredited crime laboratories that may apply to sponsor an apprentice under the pilot program.

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

(c) The commission shall award apprentice positions to individuals and accredited crime laboratories that meet the eligibility requirements established under Subsection (a). The commission shall enter into contracts with the laboratories

1 selected to sponsor apprentices under the pilot program.

2 (d) The commission shall:

3 (1) consult with the Texas Association of Crime Lab
4 Directors to determine the current need for forensic analyst
5 apprentices in each forensic discipline; and

6 (2) in consultation with the office, adopt rules
7 regarding the required training curricula for the forensic science
8 training programs described by Sections 72.202(b)(1), (2), and (3).

9 Sec. 72.204. EXPIRATION. This subchapter expires September
10 1, 2030.

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