

By: Sparks

S.B. No. 2448

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to rural workforce development.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 302, Labor Code, is amended by adding Section 302.021 to read as follows:

Sec. 302.021. RURAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT. (a) The purpose of this section is to enhance the employability, earnings, and standard of living of the people living in rural communities of this state, through job creation and expansion, education, and skills training.

(b) The commission, in consultation with the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, shall administer a rural workforce development program to support measurable programs advancing college and career readiness, skill development, and work experience opportunities, including:

(1) recruiting and retaining businesses for high-wage, high-demand careers aligned to the commission's regional labor market information under Section 302.002 and the occupational shortage areas reported under Section 302.019;

(2) working with one or more institutions of higher education, as defined by Section 61.003, Education Code, to support attainment of the coordinating board's long-range master plan for higher education developed under Section 61.051, Education Code, and to ensure students cost-effectively attain degrees and

1 postsecondary credentials of value; and

2 (3) working with participating rural school districts
3 to attain or maintain the highest or second highest performance
4 rating category under Chapter 39, Education Code.

5 (c) The commission may award grants to local entities that
6 perform activities related to the purposes of this section.

7 (d) The commission may award grants for technical
8 assistance to one or more nonprofit organizations with experience
9 in improving outcomes, including students' college and career
10 outcomes, in rural communities in this state. The nonprofit
11 organization shall assist a rural community's alignment of
12 workforce, higher education, and education goals, including access
13 and attainment of postsecondary credentials and degrees.

14 (e) The commission may accept gifts, grants, and donations
15 from any public or private source for the purposes of the program
16 and shall administer the program using money appropriated to the
17 commission or money received from other sources.

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