

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 2054
By: Menéndez
Human Services
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

There are concerns about the fact that many vulnerable youths, particularly those experiencing homelessness, are unable to obtain a driver's license due to the associated costs and fees. It is imperative for these youth to have the ability to obtain a license with as few barriers as possible so they can drive to work and school without the risk of becoming involved with the justice system. Under current law, there are no applicable provisions to waive fees associated with driver's education courses or licensing examinations. S.B. 2054 seeks to provide a mechanism to cover these costs for vulnerable youth, particularly youth experiencing homelessness, on request.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Workforce Commission in SECTION 1 of this bill and to the Department of Public Safety in SECTION 2 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 2054 amends the Transportation Code to require the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), on request, to pay the fees associated with meeting a requirement relating to a driver's license examination or a driver and traffic safety course for a person who is:

- eligible for the driver's license fee waiver for foster children or youth or homeless children or youth; or
- younger than 26 years of age and was in the managing conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services on the day before the person's 18th birthday or is a homeless child or youth as defined by applicable federal law.

The bill requires the TWC by rule to establish a process by which such a person may apply to the TWC for the payment of the fees and the TWC pays the fees to appropriate entities on the person's behalf.

S.B. 2054 requires the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to do the following using money in the identification fee exemption account:

- request that the comptroller of public accounts transfer to the TWC amounts sufficient to provide for the TWC to pay the fees for certain foster and homeless children and youths as specified by the bill to entities other than DPS; and
- pay DPS's costs associated with administering the transfers.

The bill prohibits DPS from requesting a transfer of fees or paying those administrative costs if DPS determines in consultation with the TWC that the balance of the account is insufficient.

The bill requires DPS, by rule and in consultation with the TWC, to establish a process by which transfers are made from the money in the account.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.