

SUBJECT: Redefining TYC's Prison Industry Advisory Committee

COMMITTEE: Corrections — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 7 ayes — Haggerty, Allen, Culberson, Ellis, Gray, Lengefeld, Longoria
0 nays
2 absent — Staples, Farrar

WITNESSES: None

BACKGROUND: The 74th Legislature established the Prison Industry Advisory Committee for the Texas Youth Commission (TYC) to oversee the designation of cost-accounting centers. These centers are the products of a collaborative effort between TYC and the private sector to provide qualifying employment to TYC youth and to serve as a separate accounting entity that tracks the funds used to provide this employment. The 75th Legislature shifted these responsibilities away from the committee. The committee now works to identify private-sector employers and to develop other strategic planning for the transition of TYC youth into society, although no guidelines are set for these responsibilities.

DIGEST: HB 1256 would amend the Human Resources Code to define the role of TYC's Prison Industry Advisory Committee by codifying its purpose, composition, and terms of service of committee members.

The bill would define the purpose and duties of the advisory committee as follows:

- promote the rehabilitation of youth offenders by helping them become successful members of society;
- enhance their reintegration into society with a reduced chance of committing additional crimes by helping them gain marketable skills, employment experience, and increased confidence; and
- support TYC's prison industry enhancement program by providing advice on research and development of employment programs.

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The bill would specify that the advisory committee must:

- help identify private-sector employers who would be willing to hire TYC youth;
- assist in the development of the prison industries marketing plan;
- provide input on state and federal rule changes and practices affecting the prison industries program and TYC youth; and
- advise TYC on career and technology education programs.

The bill would require the committee to include a cross-section of people, including representatives from organized labor, employers, criminal victim's rights advocates, vocational rehabilitation experts, and other ex-officio members chosen from state government.

The bill also would add the reimbursement of the child's room and board expenses while residing at a TYC facility to the list of priorities for apportioning payment of wages earned by a child working in the prison industries program.

HB 1256 would take effect September 1, 1999. The bill's provisions would not affect the present composition of the board.