

SUBJECT: Membership and reports of the child fatality review team committee

COMMITTEE: Human Services — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — Rose, Herrero, Darby, Elkins, Hernandez, Hughes, Legler, Naishtat, Walle
0 nays

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, April 9 — 31-0, on Local and Uncontested Calendar

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Marshall Kenderdine, Texas Pediatric Society; Madeline McClure, TexProtects)
Against — None

BACKGROUND: Family Code sec. 264.502 establishes the child fatality review team committee. The purposes of the committee include developing an understanding of the causes and incidence of child deaths and identifying procedures to reduce the number of preventable child deaths in Texas.

The committee has a total of 20 members. Three Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) representatives — from the bureau of vital statistics, protective services for families and children, and the bureau of epidemiology — appoint an additional 17 members from a number of disciplines, including law, law enforcement, medicine, public health, education, protective services, and others.

The committee issues a report for each preventable child death, including findings related to the child’s death and recommendations on how to prevent similar deaths. By April 1 of each year, the committee must issue a compilation of these reports to the public and to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the House, and the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). By October 1, DFPS must submit to the committee and state officials a written response on the compilation from the previous year describing which recommendations the department will implement and the methods of implementation.

DIGEST:

SB 1129 would add two new members to the child fatality review team committee: a representative of emergency medical services providers and a provider of services to victims of family violence.

The bill also would change the requirements of the committee's annual report so that it would have to contain aggregate data collected by review teams regarding each child death instead of a compilation of the reports published during the year.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2009. New appointments to the committee would have to be made by November 1, 2009.