

- SUBJECT:** Allowing HHSC’s inspector general to hire peace officers
- COMMITTEE:** General Investigating & Ethics — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 6 ayes — S. Davis, Moody, Capriglione, Nevárez, Shine, Turner  
0 nays  
1 absent — Price
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Hamilton Richards; Joanne Richards, Common Ground for Texans; Celia Cole, Feeding Texas; Brian Greene, Houston Food Bank; Jim Sheer, Texas Retailers Association)  
Against — None  
On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Wayne Salter, Health and Human Services Commission; Roland Luna, Office of Inspector General; Rob Drummond, Travis County District Attorney's Office)
- BACKGROUND:** Government Code, sec. 531.1022, requires the Health and Human Services Commission’s (HHSC) Office of Inspector General (OIG) to hire and commission peace officers to assist in the investigation of fraud, waste, and abuse in Medicaid.  
Observers note that HHSC’s OIG has no statutory authority to hire peace officers to investigate fraud occurring in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. The OIG must use local law enforcement, after sometimes-lengthy investigations, to apprehend those responsible for the fraud in these programs, which can delay the resolution of an investigation.
- DIGEST:** HB 2523 would allow the Health and Human Services Commission’s Office of Inspector General to hire and commission peace officers for the purpose of assisting the office in the investigation of fraud, waste, or abuse in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and the

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance programs.

This bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2017.