

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.S.B. 216
By: Bernsen
Education
3/15/2001
Committee Report (Substituted)

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

The Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund (TIF) makes grants to provide money for technology purchases to help develop the telecommunications infrastructure that connects certain public entities and the public health delivery system in Texas. Telemedicine is the use of live or taped video to examine a patient via satellite. Currently, only non-profit centers can apply for a TIF grant. C.S.S.B. 216 expands the use of TIF grants for telemedical equipment to rural for-profit entities with a demonstrated record of providing care to the medically underserved or underinsured so that more facilities will participate in telemedicine.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the telecommunications infrastructure fund board in SECTION 2 (Section 57.047, Utilities Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 57.042(11), Utilities Code, to redefine "telemedicine."

SECTION 2. Amends Section 57.047, Utilities Code, by adding Subsection (g) to require the telecommunications infrastructure fund board (board), in awarding a grant or loan under this section for a telemedicine project to give priority to certain entities and adopt rules prescribing the criteria a for-profit rural hospital must meet regarding service to the medically underserved or underinsured under Subsection (g)(1)(B).

SECTION 3. Amends Section 58.253(a), Utilities Code, to require an electing company, on customer request, to provide private network services to a project funded by the telecommunications infrastructure fund under Chapter 57C, except that an electing company is prohibited from being required to provide private network services to a for-profit rural hospital, or to an ambulatory health care center, as defined by Section 57.042.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2001.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE CHANGES

SECTION 1. Amends As Filed S.B. 216 by removing the definition of "health care facility." Redefines "telemedicine."

SECTION 2. Amends As Filed S.B. 216 by including an amendment to Section 57.047, Utilities Code, related to the awarding of a grant or loan under that section.

SECTION 3. Amends As Filed S.B. 216 by including an amendment to Section 58.253(a), Utilities Code, related to certain requirements of an electing company providing private network service.

SECTION 4. Amends As Filed S.B. 216 by redesignating SECTION 2 as SECTION 4 and

removing text relating to this Act being effective immediately.