

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
77R774 CBH-D

S.B. 44
By: Zaffirini
Health & Human Services
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As Filed

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Currently, there are barriers and confusion for clients who may be eligible for public assistance. Review of the interactions, communications, forms and procedures clients must go through in qualifying and applying for public assistance is needed to make assistance programs more accessible and supportive of clients seeking services. As proposed, S.B. 44 creates a work group on office standards to assist the Texas Department of Human Services by reviewing and recommending changes to the processes of client eligibility, application, and review.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill expressly grants rulemaking authority to the Texas Board of Human Services in SECTION 1 (Section 22.037, Human Resources Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 22, Human Resources Code, by adding Section 22.037, as follows:

Sec. 22.037. WORK GROUP ON OFFICE STANDARDS. Creates a work group on office standards to assist the Texas Department of Human Services (department) in improving the eligibility, application, and review processes of food stamp and financial and medical assistance programs (programs). Requires the commissioner of human services (commissioner) to appoint members of the work group to include balanced representation from certain constituencies, who serve at the will of the commissioner. Requires the department to provide staff and administrative support to the work group. Requires that the commissioner appoint a member to serve as the presiding officer who can call the work group to meet. Requires the work group to undertake certain activities in its study and make recommendations of improvements to the department. Requires the work group to file annual reports of its findings and recommendations to the Texas Board of Human Services (board). Requires the board to evaluate and consider the work group's recommendations and adopt rules to make improvements in the department's processes regarding the programs. Requires the department to file an annual report with the governor and legislature that details the recommendations of the work group and the subsequent actions taken by the department. Authorizes the department to include the report with the report required by Section 21.011(a). Exempts the work group from Chapter 2110 (State Advisory Committees), Government Code, except for Section 2110.008 (Duration of Advisory Committees), Government Code.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2001.