

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.S.B. 343
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Health & Human Services
2/25/2009
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Many Texans live in areas that are underserved by retail food stores that offer fresh, healthy fruits and vegetables. Poor nutrition is a major contributor to obesity and Texas is currently ranked 15th nationally in terms of obesity. Obesity-related chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and kidney disease are exacerbated by poor eating habits.

C.S.S.B. 343 requires that an advisory committee be established to identify the extent of the lack of access to fresh, healthy foods in underserved areas of the state and provide recommendations to the legislature regarding options for increasing access to healthy foods for Texans living in these areas.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. HEALTHY FOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE. (a) Requires the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and the commissioner of the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) to jointly establish an advisory committee to study and provide recommendations to the legislature regarding the areas of this state that are underserved in the retail availability of fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods and the impact of the limited retail availability on proper nutrition and on obesity and related chronic illnesses.

(b) Sets forth the composition of the advisory committee.

(c) Requires the executive commissioner of HHSC and the commissioner of TDA, in appointing members of the advisory committee, to ensure that the members reflect the diversity of this state, with members representing rural areas, urban areas, and different geographical regions of the state.

(d) Provides that an advisory committee member is not entitled to reimbursement of expenses or to compensation.

(e) Requires the advisory committee to meet not later than the 30th day after the date the initial appointments are made, to select a presiding officer, and to meet regularly as necessary at the call of the presiding officer.

(f) Requires the advisory committee to investigate the retail availability of fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods in this state, to develop recommendations for creating and a plan for implementing a statewide financing program to bring fresh food retailers into areas of this state that are underserved in regard to such availability, and to perform other advisory duties as requested by the executive commissioner of HHSC or the commissioner of TDA regarding that availability.

(g) Requires the advisory committee, not later than September 1, 2010, to submit to the legislature a report outlining the costs, benefits, and feasibility of a statewide financing program to bring fresh food retailers into areas of this state that are underserved in regard

to the retail availability of fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods and a plan for implementing the program.

SECTION 2. INAPPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN LAW. Provides that Chapter 2110 (State Agency Advisory Committees), Government Code, does not apply to the advisory committee established under this Act.

SECTION 3. EXPIRATION. Provides that the advisory committee established under this Act is abolished and this Act expires September 1, 2011.

SECTION 4. EFFECTIVE DATE. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.