

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 1606
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Natural Resources & Economic Development
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Texas Workforce Investment Council (council) is a 19-member board that assists the governor and the legislature with strategic planning for and evaluation of the Texas workforce system. Housed in the Office of the Governor, the council includes representatives from business, labor, education, community-based organizations, and related state entities. The council serves as the State Workforce Investment Board, a requirement under the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Additionally, the council provides staff support for the Texas Skill Standards Board, a board created by the legislature to develop a statewide system of skill standards for occupations with strong employment and earnings opportunities, but requiring less than a baccalaureate degree. The council is subject to the Sunset Act and will be abolished on September 1, 2015, unless continued by the legislature. The Sunset Advisory Commission concluded that the council's functions are needed and that it could easily take on the remaining duties of the Texas Skill Standards Board.

H.B. 1606 changes the council's Sunset review date to 2027 to continue the agency for 12 years. The bill requires the council to be reviewed during the period in which the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is reviewed.

H.B. 1606 also eliminates the Texas Skill Standards Board (board) from statute, and transfers all powers and duties of the board to the council. The bill requires the council to provide advice to the governor and the legislature on the development of a statewide system of industry-defined and industry-recognized skill standards and credentials for all major skilled occupations that provide strong employment and earnings opportunities in this state and require less than a baccalaureate degree. The bill requires the council to validate and recognize nationally established skill standards to guide curriculum development, training, assessment, and certification of workforce skills; convene industry groups to develop skill standards and certification procedures for industries and occupations in which standards have not been established or adopted and recognize the skill standards and certification procedures; review the standards developed by other states and foreign countries and enter into agreements for mutual recognition of standards and credentials to enhance portability of skills; and promote the use of standards and credentials among employers.

Finally, H.B. 1606 requires the council to report to the governor on its duties related to the development of skill standards and to provide annual reports on these duties to the governor, the division of workforce development at TWC, and the legislature.

H.B. 1606 amends current law relating to the continuation and functions of the Texas Workforce Investment Council, including assumption of the duties of the Texas Skill Standards Board.

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. Amends Section 2308.005, Government Code, as follows:

Sec. 2308.005. APPLICATION OF SUNSET ACT. Provides that the Texas Workforce Investment Council (council) is subject to Chapter 325 (Texas Sunset Act), Government Code. Provides that, unless continued in existence as provided by that chapter, the council is abolished September 1, 2027, rather than September 1, 2015. Requires the council to be reviewed during the period in which the Texas Workforce Commission is reviewed.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 2308, Government Code, by adding Section 2308.109, as follows:

Sec. 2308.109. DUTY TO DEVELOP SKILL STANDARDS. (a) Requires the council to provide advice to the governor and the legislature on the development of a statewide system of industry-defined and industry-recognized skill standards and credentials for all major skilled occupations that:

(1) provide strong employment and earnings opportunities in this state; and

(2) require less than a baccalaureate degree.

(b) Requires the council to:

(1) validate and recognize nationally established skill standards to guide curriculum development, training, assessment, and certification of workforce skills;

(2) convene industry groups to develop skill standards and certification procedures for industries and occupations in which standards have not been established or adopted and recognize the skill standards and certification procedures;

(3) review the standards developed by other states and foreign countries and enter into agreements for mutual recognition of standards and credentials to enhance portability of skills; and

(4) promote the use of standards and credentials among employers.

(c) Requires the council to:

(1) report on the council's duties under this section to the governor; and

(2) provide annual reports on the council's duties under this section to the governor, the division, and the legislature.

SECTION 3. Repealer: Subchapter H (Skill Standards Board), Chapter 2308, Government Code.

SECTION 4. Provides that the Texas Skill Standards Board (board) is abolished and all powers and duties of the board are transferred to the council.

SECTION 5. Effective date: September 1, 2015.