

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
85R11732 KKR-D

S.B. 2124  
By: Perry  
Finance  
4/19/2017  
As Filed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

The goal of the Benefits Waiver Pilot is to waive certain financial eligibility requirements for selected public assistance programs like Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Child Care Management Services (CCMS) so that client benefits are tapered rather than abruptly cut off as client employment earnings increase.

The pilot would have four stages for the participant.

1. A living wage.
2. Three months' savings.
3. No negative debt.
4. Freedom from government assistance.

Participants under the pilot would be referred through social service providers and other community partners in a wrap-around case management to ensure the participant is achieving the plans goals.

As proposed, S.B. 2124 amends current law relating to a pilot program for assisting certain recipients of public benefits with gaining self-sufficiency.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission and the Texas Workforce Commission in SECTION 1 (Section 531.02241, Government Code) of this bill.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter B, Chapter 531, Government Code, by adding Section 531.02241, as follows:

Sec. 531.02241. PILOT PROGRAM FOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF CERTAIN PERSONS RECEIVING TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES BENEFITS OR OTHER SERVICES. (a) Requires the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to develop and implement a pilot program (program) for assisting an eligible participant under this section with gaining self-sufficiency and no longer requiring financial assistance, child care assistance, or other public benefits.

(b) Provides that a person is eligible to participate in the pilot program if the person meets certain criteria.

(c) Requires that the program be designed to assist eligible participants in attaining self-sufficiency by:

(1) identifying eligibility requirements for the benefits or described assistance that may be waived for a limited period of time and that, if applied, would impede self-sufficiency;

(2) implementing strategies, including waiving the identified eligibility requirements, to remove barriers to self-sufficiency; and

(3) moving eligible participants through progressive stages toward self-sufficiency that include certain phases.

(d) Requires that the program established under this section operate for at least 12 months but provides that the program may include additional planning, testing, and data-gathering periods.

(e) Requires HHSC to develop and implement the program with the assistance of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), local workforce development boards, the United States Department of Health and Human Services, faith-based and other relevant public or private organizations, and any other entity or person HHSC determines appropriate.

(f) Requires HHSC, on the conclusion of the program but not later than September 1, 2020, to report to the legislature on the results of the program. Requires that the report include certain information.

(g) Authorizes the executive commissioner of HHSC and TWC to adopt rules to implement this section.

(h) Provides that this section expires September 1, 2020.

SECTION 2. Requires an affected agency, if before implementing any provision of this Act the state agency determines that a waiver or authorization from a federal agency is necessary for implementation of that provision, to request the waiver or authorization and to delay implementing that provision until the waiver or authorization is granted.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2017.