

- SUBJECT:** Creating a task force to examine CPS hiring and management practices
- COMMITTEE:** Human Services — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 7 ayes — Raymond, Klick, Naishtat, Rose, Sanford, Scott Turner, Zerwas
1 nays — Fallon
1 absent — N. Gonzalez
- SENATE VOTE:** On final passage, April 25 — 28-0
- WITNESSES:** For — Madeline McClure, The Texas Association for the Protection of Children; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Katherine Barillas, One Voice Texas; Irene Clements, Texas Foster Family Association; Sarah Crockett, Texas Association for Infant Mental Health; Lauren Donder, Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas; Susan Milam, National Association of Social Workers - Texas Chapter; Josette Saxton, Texans Care for Children; Andrea Sparks, Texas CASA)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Terri Ware, Department of Family and Protective Services)
- BACKGROUND:** The Child Protective Services (CPS) division under the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) provides statewide protective, family support, and family preservation services to address child abuse and neglect. CPS provides three broad categories, or stages, of services: investigations, family based safety services, and conservatorship services.

The Senate Committee on Health and Human Services' interim report to the 83rd Legislature recommended that CPS should identify best practices of units, individual case workers, and supervisors that could increase caseworker retention and casework quality and find ways to implement these best practices system-wide. The interim report also recommended performance-based incentives as a tool to reduce turnover and improve outcomes for children.

According to the interim report, CPS caseworker turnover statewide was 26.1 percent for 2012. Turnover is higher in certain regions of the state, such as Midland/Odessa, where it was 29.3 percent in 2012.

DIGEST: CSSB 1758 would create the Task Force to Examine Hiring and Management Practices to Improve Hiring and Retention of Child Protective Services Caseworkers and Improve Child Welfare.

Duties and functioning. The task force would:

- examine DFPS' hiring and management practices that reduce turnover and improve outcomes for children, including performance-based compensation and recognition, increasing the percentage of experienced hiring specialists, improving caseworker screening, fitting caseworker assignments to employee skills, involving unit supervisors in the hiring and academy training process, implementing a statewide mentorship program, and developing a process for assigning caseworkers by geographic region;
- develop policy recommendations;
- design a comprehensive, performance-based compensation and recognition system to increase caseworker retention and reduce turnover; and
- submit a report to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the Texas House speaker, and the appropriate Senate and House committees by September 1, 2014, including a description of the task force's activities, any policy recommendations, and any proposals for legislation or other matters the task force considered appropriate.

DFPS would be required to seek the task force's assistance when proposing to adopt or amend a rule as a result of a task force recommendation. The Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) would provide reasonably necessary administrative and technical support for task force activities.

Task force composition. The chairs of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee and the House Human Services Committee would jointly appoint uncompensated members to the task force as soon as practicable after the effective date of the bill, to include:

- one member from DFPS administration;
- one former CPS caseworker;

- one current CPS caseworker;
- one current CPS supervisor;
- one current CPS program director;
- two chief executive officers of corporations that use performance-based compensation;
- one consultant for a nonprofit organization that specializes in human resources, recruitment and retention;
- two human resources directors for for-profit organizations familiar with performance-based compensation and employee recruitment and retention;
- one member from a statewide child protective services advocacy organization;
- one member from the HHSC human resources department, appointed by the HHSC executive commissioner, to serve as presiding officer of the task force;
- any other person both chairs jointly determined to be appropriate.

The presiding officer would decide when the task force would meet. The persons appointing a member to the task force could designate a member as nonvoting. A vacancy on the task force would be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

Expiration. The task force would be abolished and the enabling legislation would expire on September 1, 2015.

Effective date. This bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2013.

NOTES:

CSSB 1758 differs from the original by allowing the persons appointing a member of the task force to designate the member as nonvoting. The bill has no significant fiscal implication.