

SUBJECT: Using funds from Ending Homelessness fund for housing pilot program

COMMITTEE: Urban Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — Cortez, Holland, Bernal, Campos, Gates, Jarvis Johnson,
Minjarez, Morales Shaw, Slaton

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Tammy Embrey, City of Corpus Christi; Guadalupe Cuellar, City of El Paso; Jamaal Smith, City of Houston, Office of the Mayor Sylvester Turner; Daniel Collins, El Paso County; Matthew Lovitt, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Texas; Alison Mohr Boleware, National Association of Social Workers-Texas Chapter; Lee Johnson, Texas Council of Community Centers; Seetha Kulandaisamy, Texas Council on Family Violence; Taylor Bazajou, and Madeline Kennedy, Thrive Youth Center; Ashley Harris, United Ways of Texas)

Against — None

BACKGROUND: Government Code sec. 2306.258 authorizes the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) to operate a transitional housing pilot program in four areas of the state, if funds are available. The program must address the needs of the homeless for interim housing, physical and mental health services, literacy training, job training, family counseling, credit counseling, education services, and other services that will prevent homelessness.

Transportation Code sec. 502.415 allows those registering or renewing motor vehicle registrations to voluntarily contribute to the Ending Homelessness Fund. The fund is a trust fund outside the state treasury administered by TDHCA. Money in the fund must be used to provide grants to counties and municipalities to combat homelessness.

Interested parties have suggested that the Ending Homelessness fund be

used to fund the TDHCA transitional housing pilot program.

DIGEST: HB 1277 would require the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs to use money contributed to the Ending Homelessness fund to operate a transitional housing pilot program in four areas of the state.

The department could operate the program in coordination with one or more counties or municipalities and could provide a grant from the Ending Homelessness fund to such counties or cities to operate the program. The department would have to give priority in issuing grants from the fund to counties and municipalities operating the transitional housing pilot program.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2021.