

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
85R3213 JG-D

S.B. 455
By: Zaffirini
Health & Human Services
3/27/2017
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In 2013, S.B. 1226 established Texas as an Employment First state, a designation which holds persons with disabilities to the same employment standards, responsibilities, and sets of expectations as any working-age adult. The majority of Texans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), however, either are unemployed or underemployed, despite their ability, desire, and willingness to work in the community. Workers with disabilities face significant gaps in pay and compensation compared to workers with no disability, and poverty rates for this group are much higher than in the general population.

Currently, the Employment First Task Force is established in statute and is set to expire on September 1, 2017. The task force is responsible for designing an education and outreach process relating to encouraging integrated, competitive employment for persons with disabilities, developing recommendations for policy, procedure and rules changes that are necessary to implement Employment First policies, and to submit a report with information and recommendations relating to employment services for persons with disabilities.

S.B. 455 would extend the duration of the task force from 2017 to 2021 to allow more time for the task force to achieve the goals laid out for it in the authorizing legislation of 2013. It also would require the task force to provide guidance and assistance to state agencies regarding the implementation of Employment First policies and would reflect organizational changes within current member agencies.

As proposed, S.B. 455 amends current law relating to the operations of the Employment-First Task Force.

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 Sections 531.02448(b), (f), (g), and (j), Government Code, as follows:

(b) Requires the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to appoint at least the following as members of the task force established to promote competitive employment of individuals with disabilities, subject to Subsection (e) (relating to the composition of the task force):

(1) and (2) makes no changes to these subdivisions;

(3) three representatives, rather than a representative, of HHSC, one of whom represents HHSC's assistive and rehabilitative services functions and one of whom represents HHSC's aging and disability services functions;

(4) deletes existing Subdivision (4), requiring the task force to include a representative of the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services,

redesignates existing Subdivision (5) as Subdivision (4), and makes no further changes;

(5) deletes existing Subdivision (6) and redesignates existing Subdivision (7) as Subdivision (5) and makes no further changes;

(6) to (10) redesignates existing Subdivisions (8), (9), (10), (11), and (12) as Subdivisions (6), (7), (8), (9), and (10) and makes no further changes to these subdivisions.

(f) Requires a task force established under this section or an existing committee or task force used for purposes of this section to:

(1) makes no change to this subdivision;

(2) develop recommendations for policy, procedure, and rules changes that are necessary to allow the employment-first policy described under Section 531.02447(b) (relating to certain requirements for HHSC's, the Texas Education Agency's, and the Texas Workforce Commission's joint employment-first policy) to be fully implemented and to provide guidance and assistance to a state agency in implementing those changes;

(2-a) meet at least quarterly and at other times at the call of the presiding officer; and

(3) makes no changes to this subdivision.

(g) Provides that a member of a task force is not entitled to compensation. Authorizes members to be reimbursed for expenses as follows:

(1) and (2) makes no change to these subdivisions; and

(3) makes conforming changes.

(j) Provides that a task force established under this section is abolished and this section expires September 1, 2021, rather than September 1, 2017.

SECTION 2. Effective date: August 31, 2017.