

By: White, Johnson of Harris

H.B. No. 553

Substitute the following for H.B. No. 553:

By: White

C.S.H.B. No. 553

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of a task force to identify opportunities for academic credit and industry recognition for inmates of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 19, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 19.012 to read as follows:

Sec. 19.012. TASK FORCE ON ACADEMIC CREDIT AND INDUSTRY RECOGNITION. (a) The Windham School District, in consultation with the department, shall establish a task force to review the work or other productive activities in which persons confined or imprisoned in the department engage.

(b) The task force is composed of the following nine members:

(1) two representatives of the department designated by the executive director of the department;

(2) one representative of the district designated by the superintendent of the district;

(3) one representative of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board designated by the commissioner of higher education;

(4) one representative of the Texas Workforce Commission designated by the executive director of the commission;

(5) one representative of a private vendor operating a

1 correctional facility under a contract with the department,
2 appointed by the governor; and

3 (6) three representatives of public junior colleges,
4 as defined by Section 61.003, that provide education services to
5 persons confined or imprisoned in the department, appointed by the
6 governor.

7 (c) The governor shall designate a member of the task force
8 to serve as presiding officer.

9 (d) A vacancy on the task force shall be filled in the same
10 manner as the initial appointment.

11 (e) A member of the task force may not receive compensation
12 for service on the task force, but is entitled to reimbursement for
13 actual and necessary expenses incurred in performing task force
14 duties.

15 (f) The task force may accept gifts and grants from any
16 source to be used to carry out a function of the task force.

17 (g) The task force shall meet at least quarterly at the call
18 of the presiding officer and at other times as determined by the
19 presiding officer.

20 (h) The task force shall:

21 (1) conduct an ongoing comprehensive review of the
22 work or other productive activities in which persons confined or
23 imprisoned in the department engage; and

24 (2) identify opportunities for the award of high
25 school credit, college credit, or joint high school and college
26 credit, or the award of an industry-recognized credential or
27 certificate, for engaging in that work or activity.

1 (i) The district, in consultation with the department, the
2 Texas Education Agency, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating
3 Board, and the Texas Workforce Commission, shall for any type of
4 work or productive activity for which an opportunity is identified
5 under Subsection (h), determine the actions necessary for obtaining
6 the award of the applicable academic credit or industry
7 recognition.

8 (j) Not less than once every four years, the task force
9 shall submit to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker
10 of the house of representatives, and the standing committees of the
11 legislature having jurisdiction over the department a report that
12 summarizes the review conducted under Subsection (h) and the
13 district's actions with regard to obtaining the award of academic
14 credit or industry recognition under Subsection (i). The district
15 shall provide the task force with any information necessary to
16 complete the report.

17 (k) Chapter 2110, Government Code, does not apply to the
18 task force established under this section.

19 (l) The task force shall submit the first report required
20 under Subsection (j) not later than December 31, 2020. This
21 subsection expires February 1, 2021.

22 SECTION 2. Not later than December 1, 2017, the executive
23 director of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the
24 superintendent of the Windham School District, the commissioner of
25 higher education, the executive director of the Texas Workforce
26 Commission, and the governor shall appoint members to the task
27 force established by Section 19.012, Education Code, as added by

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1 this Act, in the manner required by Subsection (b) of that section.

2 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017.