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TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Weekly Newsletter
March 16, 2015 Hearing

Bills Considered by Chairman Raymond's Committee

HB 1679: Continuation of the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities
Author: Chairman Richard Peña Raymond



Since passage of the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act in 1975, states have been required to establish state developmental disabilities councils to receive federal funding to advocate for persons with developmental disabilities. In Texas, the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD) serves in this role. The Sunset Commission, on which Chairman Raymond serves, determined Texas continues to need the TCDD to receive and administer federal funds to identify and address the most pressing needs of Texans with developmental disabilities and allow them to assert more control over their lives.

Chairman Raymond's bill ensures the TCDD is not abolished and will continue to serve the needs of Texans with developmental disabilities for another 12 years.

Status: Approved by the committee as introduced.

HB 1680: Continuation of the Functions of the Texas Health Services Authority

Author: Chairman Richard Peña Raymond

The Texas legislature created the Texas Health Services Authority (THSA) in 2007 as a public, non-profit corporation to help promote use of electronic health records and health information exchanges



(HIE) in Texas. The Sunset Commission, on which Chairman Raymond serves, concluded that THSA needed an additional six years of operation as a statutory entity to prepare it for transition to a private non-profit corporation and to allow it to further develop its revenue producing services.

Chairman Raymond's bill makes changes necessary to remove the Texas Health Services Authority (THSA) from statute as of September 1, 2021. Afterwards, THSA would continue in the private sector in conformance with market-based principles. The bill also extends beyond 2021 the program for certifying past compliance with privacy and security standards for the electronic sharing of protected health information adopted by the Health and Human Services Commission.

Status: Approved by the committee as substituted

HB 2463: Relating to the Functions of the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)

Author: Chairman Richard Peña Raymond

The legislature created the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) in 2003 to work with Texans with disabilities to improve the quality of their lives and to enable their full integration into society. To meet its mission, DARS focuses on providing time-limited services through a variety of state- and federally- funded programs.

The Sunset Commission, on which Chairman Raymond serves, has recommended several statutory changes that are contained in HB 2463. These changes include: integrating independent living services; defining DARS' role in providing independent living services; requiring clear, validated guidelines for DARS caseworkers; requiring a uniform, consistent case review system; requiring DARS to designate staff to monitor program performance. The bill also establishes two existing programs in statute. One program currently serves persons with traumatic brain or spinal cord injuries while the second program serves children with autism spectrum disorder.



Status: Left pending in committee as additional clarifying language is drafted.

Bills Voted Out of Committee

HB 1679: Relating to the continuation of the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities.

Author: Chairman Richard Peña Raymond

HB 1680: Relating to the continuation and functions of the Texas Health Services Authority as a quasi-governmental entity and the electronic exchange of health care information.

Author: Chairman Richard Peña Raymond

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