

children at Risk Interim Charge Suggestions

Texas House of Representatives

Speaking Out + Driving Change for Children

Scope and Focus

The following interim charge recommendations direct the study, monitoring, and evaluation of state policies, programs, and investments affecting **children, youth, and families in Texas**. These charges emphasize oversight of recently enacted legislation, assessment of program implementation and outcomes, and identification of statutory, regulatory, and administrative changes needed to improve effectiveness, coordination, and accountability across state systems.

AREAS OF FOCUS INCLUDE:

- **Early childhood education and child care access:** Improve access to high-quality early learning through better affordability, workforce stability, and interagency coordination.
- **Public education governance and attendance outcomes:** Strengthen governance, attendance policy, and early-warning systems to support student engagement and academic success.
- **Workforce development and economic mobility:** Enhance cross-system alignment to expand career pathways, credential attainment, and workforce participation.
- **Public health and human services:** Improve coordination and access to health and human services.
- **Prevention of human trafficking and youth disconnection:** Strengthen cross-agency prevention, identification, and support systems to reduce exploitation and youth disconnection.

Appropriations

- Monitor the impact of increased funding on parental waiting lists and provider reimbursement rates in the child care program at the Texas Workforce Commission.

Public Education

- Monitor the implementation of Senate Bill 2, including the impact of Education Savings Accounts on private child care providers and pre-kindergarten.
- Monitor the implementation of House Bill 117 and examine efforts to improve the governance of child care in Texas. Examine opportunities to increase partnerships between public and charter school pre-kindergarten programs and quality child care providers.
- Monitor implementation of House Bill 3963 and other efforts to improve data and outcomes in publicly funded early childhood education in Texas.
- Examine support for pregnant students and make recommendations to ensure attendance and academic success.
- Consider whether additional statutory or rule changes are required to strengthen the relationship between attendance policy and academic success, including articulation of the consequences of truancy, support for students who have chronic absences, and alignment with other state programs. Evaluate how chronic absenteeism, leaver lists, and early-warning indicators can be used to prevent youth disconnection.

Trade, Workforce, and Economic Development

- Monitor the implementation of House Bill 2294 and House Bill 4903 and other local efforts to improve coordination between state agencies, to improve the retention and training of child care educators, and reduce child care deserts in this state. Examine opportunities to increase child care availability during non-traditional work hours.
- Assess barriers that limit Texas Rising Star participation by licensed child care providers and after-school programs, including administrative burden, reimbursement rates, and program eligibility requirements.
- Monitor implementation of Senate Bill 1143 and evaluate interagency coordination, data integration, and service alignment to improve workforce participation and outcomes for Texans ages 16–24.
- Review Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) policies and practices for serving systems-impacted youth, including justice-involved youth, to assess access to employment, completion of

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secondary education, coordination with community-based organizations, and the effectiveness of connected pathways that link credentials to sustainable, high-growth occupations.

- Study methods for expanding career pathways for survivors of human trafficking.
- Examine SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) program rules, participation, and outcomes. Provide recommendations to better align with federal standards, recognize Credentials of Value, and scale third-party partnerships to increase the number of meaningful training opportunities to strengthen workforce participation.

Public Health

- Monitor implementation of House Bill 754 and House Bill 742 and other efforts to increase Texans' ability to identify and report human trafficking.
- Monitor implementation of Senate Bill 25 and encourage other efforts to increase school-based physical activity and recess.

Human Services

- Monitor implementation of House Bill 451 and assess current efforts to identify children in the state's juvenile justice and foster care systems who are at risk of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.
- Monitor the implementation of Senate Bill 599 and examine other opportunities to reduce regulatory burden on child care providers and increase child care access for working parents without negatively impacting child care quality.
- Strengthen the operational capacity and technological capabilities of our state's information and referral systems, including 211 Texas that connect Texans to critical supports and other services provided by nonprofits.
- Evaluate current state efforts and interagency coordination related to child nutrition programs, including outreach and technical assistance, to assess access to meals and snacks for children in low-income and underserved areas.
- Examine SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) program rules and provide recommendations to better align with federal standards, define Credentials of Value, and scale third-party partnerships to increase the number of meaningful training opportunities offered to strengthen workforce participation.

State Affairs

- Monitor implementation of House Bill 45 and other efforts to increase the criminal prosecution of human trafficking in this state.

Criminal Jurisprudence

- Examine opportunities for cross-agency collaboration to develop transitional vocational living supports for dual-status, systems-impacted youth, particularly those reentering the community from juvenile justice facilities.
 - This review should identify gaps in housing and supportive services, including the current focus of TJJD and local juvenile justice departments on career readiness that leaves youth exiting the system at ages 16–17 without access to workforce programs, employment eligibility, or sufficient support to complete a high school diploma or GED.
 - Assess current Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) processes for serving systems-impacted youth, the need for stronger collaboration with community-based organizations, and the importance of “warm handoffs” and clearly connected pathways to employment so that youth who earn certifications or credentials understand how to leverage them into sustainable, credential-aligned jobs.
 - The review should result in recommendations related to training needs, accountability metrics, and improved coordination among state and local juvenile justice, education, housing, and workforce partners.
- Examine methods for providing legal relief for survivors of human trafficking facing current criminal charges related to their victimization or with past criminal convictions related to their victimization.

Licensing & Admin

- Examine methods for addressing and regulating licensed massage businesses advertising on erotic websites.

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