

1-1 By: Perry S.B. No. 2124  
 1-2 (In the Senate - Filed March 10, 2017; March 28, 2017, read  
 1-3 first time and referred to Committee on Finance; April 27, 2017,  
 1-4 reported adversely, with favorable Committee Substitute by the  
 1-5 following vote: Yeas 11, Nays 2; April 27, 2017, sent to printer.)

1-6 COMMITTEE VOTE

	Yea	Nay	Absent	PNV
1-7 Nelson	X			
1-8 Hinojosa	X			
1-9 Bettencourt	X			
1-10 Birdwell			X	
1-11 Hancock	X			
1-12 Huffman	X			
1-13 Kolthorst		X		
1-14 Nichols	X			
1-15 Schwertner		X		
1-16 Seliger	X			
1-17 Taylor of Galveston	X			
1-18 Uresti	X			
1-19 Watson	X			
1-20 West	X			
1-21 Whitmire			X	

1-23 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR S.B. No. 2124 By: Hancock

1-24 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
 1-25 AN ACT

1-26 relating to a pilot program for assisting certain recipients of  
 1-27 public benefits to gain permanent self-sufficiency.

1-28 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

1-29 SECTION 1. Subchapter B, Chapter 531, Government Code, is  
 1-30 amended by adding Section 531.02241 to read as follows:

1-31 Sec. 531.02241. PILOT PROGRAM FOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF  
 1-32 CERTAIN PERSONS RECEIVING TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES  
 1-33 BENEFITS OR OTHER SERVICES. (a) In this section:

1-34 (1) "Financial assistance benefits" means money  
 1-35 payments under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)  
 1-36 program authorized by Chapter 31, Human Resources Code.

1-37 (2) "Living wage" means an amount of money, determined  
 1-38 by a market-based calculation that uses geographically specific  
 1-39 expenditure data, that is sufficient to meet a family's minimum  
 1-40 necessary spending on basic needs, including food, child care,  
 1-41 health insurance, housing, and transportation.

1-42 (3) "Self-sufficiency" means being employed in a  
 1-43 position that pays a living wage, having financial savings in an  
 1-44 amount that is equal to at least three months of living wage income,  
 1-45 and owing only a reasonable amount of debt.

1-46 (b) The commission shall develop and implement a pilot  
 1-47 program for assisting up to 100 eligible participants under this  
 1-48 section to gain permanent self-sufficiency and no longer require  
 1-49 financial assistance or other public benefits.

1-50 (c) The pilot program will test waiving, for at least 24  
 1-51 months but not more than 60 months, income and asset limit  
 1-52 eligibility requirements for financial assistance benefits. The  
 1-53 waiver of any income limit requirement must be in an amount that  
 1-54 does not exceed the amount, based on a participant's family makeup  
 1-55 and the living wage in the participant's geographical area of  
 1-56 residence, determined to be necessary for the purposes of the  
 1-57 program. The waiver of any asset limit requirement must be in an  
 1-58 amount that is equal to or less than three months of the  
 1-59 participant's income.

1-60 (d) The pilot program must be designed to allow social

2-1 services providers, public benefit offices, and other community  
 2-2 partners to refer potential participants to the program. A person  
 2-3 is eligible to participate in the program established under this  
 2-4 section if the person:  
 2-5 (1) is a recipient of financial assistance benefits;  
 2-6 (2) has a total household income that is less than a  
 2-7 living wage based on the recipient's family makeup and geographical  
 2-8 area of residence;  
 2-9 (3) is at least 18 but not more than 62 years of age;  
 2-10 and  
 2-11 (4) is willing and legally able to be employed.  
 2-12 (e) The pilot program must be designed to assist eligible  
 2-13 participants in attaining self-sufficiency by:  
 2-14 (1) identifying eligibility requirements for the  
 2-15 benefits described by Subsection (d)(1) that may be waived for a  
 2-16 limited period of time and that, if applied, would impede  
 2-17 self-sufficiency;  
 2-18 (2) implementing strategies, including waiving the  
 2-19 eligibility requirements identified in Subdivision (1), to remove  
 2-20 barriers to self-sufficiency; and  
 2-21 (3) moving eligible participants through progressive  
 2-22 stages toward self-sufficiency that include the following phases:  
 2-23 (A) an initial phase in which a participant moves  
 2-24 out of an emergent crisis by securing housing, medical care, and  
 2-25 financial assistance benefits;  
 2-26 (B) a second phase in which the participant moves  
 2-27 toward stability by securing employment and, if necessary, child  
 2-28 care and by participating in services that build the financial  
 2-29 management skills necessary to meet financial goals;  
 2-30 (C) a third phase in which the participant  
 2-31 transitions to self-sufficiency by securing employment that pays a  
 2-32 living wage, reducing debt, and building savings; and  
 2-33 (D) a final phase in which the participant  
 2-34 attains self-sufficiency by retaining employment that pays a living  
 2-35 wage, amassing at least three months of living wage savings, and  
 2-36 eliminating debt so that the participant will no longer be  
 2-37 dependent on financial assistance or other public benefits.  
 2-38 (f) A person who wishes to participate in the pilot program  
 2-39 must attend an in-person intake meeting with a program case  
 2-40 manager. During the intake meeting the case manager shall:  
 2-41 (1) determine whether:  
 2-42 (A) the person meets the eligibility  
 2-43 requirements under Subsection (d); and  
 2-44 (B) the income or asset limit eligibility  
 2-45 requirements may be waived under the program;  
 2-46 (2) review the person's demographic information and  
 2-47 household financial budget;  
 2-48 (3) assess the person's current financial and career  
 2-49 situations;  
 2-50 (4) collaborate with the person to develop and  
 2-51 implement strategies for removing barriers to attaining  
 2-52 self-sufficiency, including waiving income and asset limit  
 2-53 eligibility requirements for financial assistance benefits; and  
 2-54 (5) if the person is determined to be eligible for and  
 2-55 chooses to participate in the program, schedule a follow-up meeting  
 2-56 to further assess the person's crisis, review available referral  
 2-57 services, and create a service plan.  
 2-58 (g) The pilot program must provide each participant with  
 2-59 holistic, wraparound case management services to ensure that goals  
 2-60 included in a participant's service plan are achieved. A  
 2-61 participant must be assigned a program case manager who shall:  
 2-62 (1) if the participant is determined to be eligible,  
 2-63 provide the participant with a waiver described by Subsection (c),  
 2-64 allowing the participant to continue receiving financial  
 2-65 assistance benefits;  
 2-66 (2) assess, at the follow-up meeting scheduled under  
 2-67 Subsection (f)(5), the participant's crisis, review available  
 2-68 referral services, and create a service plan; and  
 2-69 (3) during the initial phase of the program, create

3-1 medium- and long-term goals consistent with the strategies  
3-2 developed under Subsection (f)(4).

3-3 (h) The pilot program established under this section must  
3-4 operate for at least 24 months. The program shall also include 16  
3-5 additional months for:

3-6 (1) planning and designing the program before the  
3-7 program begins operation; and

3-8 (2) data collection and program evaluation after the  
3-9 program begins operation.

3-10 (i) The commission shall develop and implement the pilot  
3-11 program established under this section with the assistance of the  
3-12 Texas Workforce Commission, local workforce development boards,  
3-13 faith-based and other relevant public or private organizations, and  
3-14 any other entity or person the commission determines appropriate.

3-15 (j) The commission shall monitor and evaluate the pilot  
3-16 program in a manner that allows for promoting research-informed  
3-17 results of the program.

3-18 (k) On the conclusion of the pilot program but not later  
3-19 than 24 months following the date on which the program begins  
3-20 operation, the commission shall report to the legislature on the  
3-21 results of the program. The report must include:

3-22 (1) an evaluation of the program's effect on eligible  
3-23 participants in achieving self-sufficiency and no longer requiring  
3-24 public benefits;

3-25 (2) the impact to this state on the costs of the  
3-26 financial assistance benefits program and the child care management  
3-27 services program operated by the Texas Workforce Commission; and

3-28 (3) recommendations on the feasibility and  
3-29 continuation of the program.

3-30 (l) During the operation of the pilot program, the  
3-31 commission shall provide to the legislature additional reports  
3-32 concerning the program that the commission determines to be  
3-33 appropriate.

3-34 (m) The executive commissioner and the Texas Workforce  
3-35 Commission may adopt rules to implement this section.

3-36 (n) This section expires September 1, 2022.

3-37 SECTION 2. If before implementing any provision of this Act  
3-38 a state agency determines that a waiver or authorization from a  
3-39 federal agency is necessary for implementation of that provision,  
3-40 the agency affected by the provision shall request the waiver or  
3-41 authorization and may delay implementing that provision until the  
3-42 waiver or authorization is granted.

3-43 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect only if a specific  
3-44 appropriation for the implementation of the Act is provided in a  
3-45 general appropriations act of the 85th Legislature.

3-46 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
3-47 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
3-48 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
3-49 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
3-50 Act takes effect September 1, 2017.

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