

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.S.B. 2376
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Transportation
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Choose Life fund is a specialty license plate program in Texas that was established in 2011. The program allows Texas drivers to purchase specialty license plates to raise money for adoption-related services in the state. The funds are granted to nonprofit organizations that provide for material needs of pregnant women considering adoption or for infants awaiting adoption. However, with growing adoption rates, it is clear that the program needs to revamp and expand so that the State of Texas can support as many women and children as possible in acquiring vital resources throughout the adoption process. C.S.S.B. 2376 seeks to increase funds to help birth mothers, children, and prospective adoptive parents by changing the name of the fund from the Choose Life account to the Support Adoption account, making it clear that the donated dollars are used solely to support adoption. Additionally, C.S.S.B. 2376 will direct the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles to present an option to donate to the Support Adoption account prior to payment for a Texas driver's license or driver's license renewal.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.S.B. 2376 amends the Government Code and Transportation Code to change the name of the Choose Life specialty license plate program to the Support Adoption specialty license plate program, also changing the name of the account maintained for the program accordingly. The bill's Government Code revisions include the following organizations among those eligible for funding from the support adoption account:

- a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that provides counseling and material assistance to prospective adoptive parents that does not charge for services provided, except for adoption-related costs or fees;
- an adoption agency, defined by reference as a person, other than a natural parent or guardian of a child, who plans for the placement of or places a child in the home of a prospective adoptive parent; and
- an authorized agency, defined by reference as a public agency or approved private entity authorized to care for or to place children for adoption.

C.S.S.B. 2376, in its Transportation Code revisions, authorizes a person, when the person applies for an original or renewal driver's license or personal identification certificate, to

contribute any amount to the Support Adoption account. The bill requires the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to:

- include space on the first page of each application for an original or renewal driver's license or personal identification certificate that allows a person applying for an original or renewal driver's license or personal identification certificate to indicate the amount that the person is voluntarily contributing to the account;
- provide, not later than December 31, 2023, an opportunity for the person to contribute to the account during the application process for an original or renewal driver's license or personal identification certificate on the DPS website; and
- send any contribution made to the comptroller of public accounts for deposit to the credit of the Support Adoption account not later than the 14th day of each month.

The bill authorizes DPS to deduct money equal to the amount of reasonable expenses for administering the voluntary contribution to the Support Adoption account before sending the money to the comptroller.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.

COMPARISON OF SENATE ENGROSSED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.S.B. 2376 may differ from the engrossed in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the engrossed and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute includes adoption agencies and authorized agencies, defined by reference to provisions of the Family Code, among the agencies eligible for funding from the Support Adoption specialty license plate program, whereas the engrossed did not include these entities among the entities eligible for program funding.