

Texas Nonprofit Council Comments Texas Sunset Staff Report on the Health and Human Services Commission

The Texas Nonprofit Council appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Sunset Commission staff's recommendations regarding the Sunset review of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). Our comments are pursuant to Recommendation #13, which concerns advisory committees.

We respectfully request that the Sunset Commission remove the Texas Nonprofit Council (TNC) and the Interagency Coordinating Group (ICG) from Recommendation 13.1, which would take the two entities out of statute. We further request that the Sunset Commission revise recommendations 25 and 26 in Appendix E, which currently would eliminate statutory reports by the TNC and the ICG. We request that the reporting requirements for the TNC and the ICG be continued.

The Staff report states: "To obtain stakeholder input related to rules and policies for its programs, the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) oversees 41 advisory committees, 35 of which are in statute and briefly described in Appendix D. Advisory committees are designed for stakeholders and members of the public, either through membership on a committee or during the public input period of a meeting, to advise or provide certain perspectives or expertise to the agency on its responsibilities."

Appendix identifies the Texas Nonprofit Council and its counterpart, the Interagency Coordinating Group, as statutory advisory committees to HHSC. However, neither of these bodies actually is an advisory committee to HHSC.

The Texas Nonprofit Council (TNC) is composed of 1 representatives of statutorily designated nonprofit disciplines. The TNC was established by SB 993, 83rd Regular Session, to assist the Interagency Coordinating Group (ICG) in improving contracting relationships, communications and collaboration between state agencies and the nonprofit sector. The ICG is convened by the Texas National Service Commission (OneStar Foundation) and consists of representatives of 24 state agencies, each appointed by their respective agency head.

According to the enrolled bill summary for SB 993, TNC is not subject to Chapter 2110, Texas Government Code, governing state agency advisory committees. TNC is subject to Sunset review in 2019 and every 12th year after 2019 but cannot be abolished under the Sunset Act.

Texas has tens of thousands of 501(c)(3) nonprofits, and they are crucial to the successful implementation of many state programs. The work of the TNC, in collaboration with the ICG, allows state agencies and the nonprofit community to continue to work together to make government more efficient and more responsive, enhancing the effectiveness of both parties. The tough economic times experienced by families, nonprofits and state agencies require greater cooperation between the nonprofit sector and state services to meet the needs of vulnerable residents. By helping to boost the effectiveness of nonprofits, the TNC may be able to assist the state in redesigning programs and services in the future that could be provided more efficiently and effectively by nonprofits.

Respectfully submitted by the Texas Nonprofit Council:

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