



## House Bill 3783

*Selene Rodriguez, Assistant Director of Federal Affairs*

### Purpose

House Bill 3783 ([2023](#)) proposes an economy and efficiency audit of Texas border security programs.

### Background

Many state agencies are committed to Texas border security operations ([Rodriguez & Scott, 2022](#)). With more resources allocated to border security than any other state, Texas has the responsibility to its taxpayers to ensure that money is being efficiently and responsibly spent.

Historic funding has been provided by the state Legislature to support border programs and Operation Lone Star—more than \$4 billion ([Legislative Budget Board, 2022](#)). This funding has been allocated for purposes such as court administration resources, additional personnel for various departments, tactical machinery and weaponry, travel expenses, incarceration resources, and medical services.

While securing the border is a federal responsibility, the reality is that Texas continues to have to step in to protect its citizens from the border crisis, and funding these operations will continue to be needed. For the success of the state both in securing the border and in general, it is crucial Texas taxpayer resources be used the most efficient way possible. For these reasons, an economy and efficiency audit should be required of all border security programs in the State of Texas.

An efficiency audit is a comprehensive examination ([Texas Public Policy Foundation, n.d.](#)) of an entity's budget and operations conducted to identify ways to reduce expenditures and better use resources. Specifically, House Bill 3783 calls for a third-party efficiency audit conducted by an audit organization that is impartial and independent of the agencies being reviewed. Third-party efficiency audits have proven to be an effective tool to improve the performance of state services.

One example of a successful third-party efficiency audit is when the 87th Legislature passed requirements for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program to undergo efficiency audits. The audit identified potential savings to taxpayers up to \$41 million annually ([Texas Public Policy Foundation, 2023](#); [Public Consulting Group, 2022, p. 74](#)). HB 3783 prescribes a process by which the auditor will conduct an efficiency audit of all state funded border security programs aimed at securing the Texas–Mexico border and Texas communities.

### Proposal

HB 3783 seeks to implement regular third-party efficiency audits of border security programs to maximize the efficiency of taxpayer dollars and determine whether certain expenditures achieve their desired outcomes. This ensures mission goals are being met and tax dollars are not being misused.

HB 3783 would examine all state resources, such as financial resources, personnel, and technology used for the purposes of border security as well as assess the efficiency and effectiveness of state border security programs.

HB 3783 would identify any duplication, overlap, and conflict between border security programs, examine communication and coordination among state agencies responsible for said programs, and assess the efficiency and effectiveness of state and federal coordination and cooperation on border security operations.

*continued*

HB 3783 would include audits of:

- (1) Department of Public Safety;
- (2) Texas Military Department;
- (3) Texas Division of Emergency Management;
- (4) Parks and Wildlife Department;
- (5) Texas Department of Criminal Justice;
- (6) Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System

Finally, HB 3783 would present the results of the audit and any recommendations to the state auditor and the chief administrative officers of the state agencies subject to the audit. By November 1 following the year that the audit is conducted, the state auditor would prepare and submit a report of the audit and recommendations for improvement to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, and the Legislative Budget Board. The report in its entirety should be publicly accessible. These audits would be paid for with existing resources from the agencies receiving border security funding.

## References

HB 3783. Introduced. 88th Texas Legislature. Regular. (2023). <https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=88R&Bill=HB3783>

Legislative Budget Board. (2022, July). Border Security – Appropriations and Reporting Requirements. [https://www.lbb.texas.gov/Documents/Publications/Presentation/7515\\_Border\\_Security.pdf](https://www.lbb.texas.gov/Documents/Publications/Presentation/7515_Border_Security.pdf)

Public Consulting Group. (2022). Texas temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) efficiency audit state fiscal years 2018 – 2021. <https://sao.texas.gov/reports/main/23-304.pdf>

Rodriguez, S., & Scott, R. (2022). Texas border security panorama. Texas Public Policy Foundation. <https://www.texaspolicy.com/texas-border-security-panorama/>

Texas Public Policy Foundation. (n.d.). City & county efficiency audits. <https://www.texaspolicy.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2021-22-Lege-Guide-1-pager-GFTP-Efficiency-Audits.pdf>

Texas Public Policy Foundation. (2023, March 9). TPPF applauds statewide efficiency audit legislation. <https://www.texaspolicy.com/press/tppf-applauds-statewide-efficiency-audit-legislation>

**Selene Rodriguez** is the assistant director of federal affairs at the Texas Public Policy Foundation. In this role, she conducts research on public policy issues; assists the Foundation in academic publication; educates lawmakers and members of the public on Foundation research; and provides formal testimony to local, state, and federal entities. Prior to this position, Rodriguez served in the Marine Corps as an intelligence specialist and completed an internship at the Texas Public Policy Foundation. Born and raised in Del Rio, Texas, Rodriguez graduated from Texas State University with a B.A. in political science and is currently a graduate student. She has a passion for spending time with her family and volunteering in local community programs and political organizations.

