

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1351
By: Hinojosa
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

According to interested parties, the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) Grant Program was created by the legislature to supplement existing capacity-building programs for job seekers and is currently administered by the comptroller of public accounts. The parties suggest, however, that experience in administering the JET program has demonstrated a need for more comprehensive understanding of the employment market to better target grant awards. The parties note that the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) administers a variety of programs designed to equip job seekers for work opportunities, particularly as new industries begin or expand operations in Texas that require new employees to have specific training. S.B. 1351 seeks to transfer the administration of the JET program to the TWC in an effort to bolster the TWC's capacity-building mission and better prepare out-of-work Texans for jobs.

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 rulemaking authority previously granted to the comptroller of public accounts is transferred to the Texas Workforce Commission in SECTION 6 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 1351 provides for the following actions to be taken not later than September 1, 2015:

- transfers the administration of the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) Grant Program from the comptroller of public accounts to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC);
- continues all rules, forms, policies, procedures, or decisions of the comptroller that are related to the JET Grant Program in effect as rules, forms, policies, procedures, or decisions of the TWC until superseded by a rule or other appropriate act of the TWC;
- transfers all money, obligations, memoranda of understanding, leases, rights, and contracts, including grant agreements, of the comptroller related to the JET Grant Program to the TWC and establishes that the TWC assumes, without a change in status, the position of the comptroller in all transferred contracts, including grant agreements, related to the JET Grant Program;
- transfers records in the custody of the comptroller related to the JET Grant Program to the TWC and establishes that such records become the property of the TWC; and
- establishes that a reference in law or administrative rule to the comptroller relating to the administration of the JET Grant Program means the TWC.

The bill requires the comptroller and the TWC, before the transfer of the administration of the

JET Grant Program, to coordinate the transfer of powers and duties, including records, appropriations, disbursements, compliance audits, monitoring and enforcement, and other items, to ensure a smooth transition.

S.B. 1351 amends the Education Code to remove from the membership of the advisory board created to assist in administration of the JET Grant Program the comptroller and a member of the public appointed by the comptroller and to include on the advisory board the chair of the TWC, who serves as the presiding officer. The bill authorizes the advisory board to meet as needed to review received applications and recommend awarding JET grants, as an alternative to meeting for such purpose at least once each quarter. The bill removes in-kind contributions as a source from which matching funds may be obtained by a public junior college or public technical institute in order to be eligible to receive a JET grant to develop new career and technical education courses or programs at the college or institute.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2015.