

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 654
By: Clardy
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties suggest that there are too many formula funding and dropped course restrictions for returning adult students at public institutions of higher education. H.B. 654 seeks to eliminate certain of those restrictions and encourage returning adult students to complete their degrees.

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 is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 654 amends the Education Code to require the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, beginning with the 2017 fall semester, to adopt rules under which a public institution of higher education is required to permit a student to drop one additional course under the applicable circumstances beyond the maximum number of courses permitted to be dropped under state law or institution policy, as applicable, if the student has reenrolled at the institution following a break in enrollment covering the 24-month period preceding the first class day of the initial semester or other academic term of the student's reenrollment and successfully completed at least 50 semester credit hours of course work at the institution before that break in enrollment. The bill requires the coordinating board to include funding for the first 15 additional semester credit hours earned by such a student in the coordinating board's funding formulas without consideration of certain restrictions, makes that requirement applicable beginning with funding recommendations for the 2020-2021 state fiscal biennium, and prohibits an institution of higher education from charging tuition to a resident undergraduate student at a higher rate based on repeated or excessive undergraduate hours for courses taken by the student that are required to be included by the coordinating board in its funding formulas under the bill's provisions.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2017.