

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1624
By: Raymond
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

As the state's population grows and becomes more diverse, there is an increasing need to address the underrepresentation of minorities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields and in the workforce in order to maintain the state's economic competitiveness. As research has indicated, overall minority participation in STEM programs is inadequate, to the detriment of the state. However, historically black colleges and universities and Hispanic-serving institutions have a demonstrated track record in educating and preparing minority students in STEM fields, and there have been calls to achieve broader success through replicating best practices from those institutions. H.B. 1624 seeks to encourage such replication by providing for a study to identify best practices in STEM programs at minority-serving institutions of higher education and by creating a grant program to implement those practices.

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

H.B. 1624 amends the Education Code to require the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), not later than January 1, 2022, to conduct a study on best practices in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) programs offered by institutions of higher education designated as minority-serving institutions by the U.S. Department of Education. The bill requires the study to identify best practices in the recruitment, retention, and advancement of members of racial and ethnic minority groups in STEM programs. The bill requires the THECB to award grants for the 2022-2023 academic year from appropriated or otherwise available funds to minority-serving institutions to implement the best practices identified by the study. The bill requires the THECB to develop a competitive application process to award the grants. The bill's provisions expire September 1, 2023.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2021.