

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 999
By: Bernal
Public Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In July 2020, recognizing the past and anticipated impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the commissioner of education and the Texas Education Agency waived the grade promotion requirements for students in fifth and eighth grades for the 2020-2021 school year, which authorized promotion regardless of STAAR scores. For high school students in Texas, graduation is contingent upon satisfying certain credit requirements under the foundation high school program and passing five end-of-course tests. Given the commissioner's lack of authority to waive statutory graduation requirements, there have been calls for the legislature to align these graduation requirements with grade promotion requirements, as waived by the commissioner due to impacts of the pandemic. Without legislative action, some high school students will be forced to continue to retake end-of-course tests, some of which were initially administered up to three years prior, in order to be awarded their high school diploma. C.S.H.B. 999 seeks to address this issue by authorizing an individual graduation committee to determine a high school senior's eligibility for graduation without considering the student's end-of-course test performance.

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

C.S.H.B. 999 amends the Education Code to authorize all 12th grade students for the 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 school years who have failed to pass one or more end-of-course tests to be awarded a high school diploma as determined by an individual graduation committee. An individual graduation committee is not required to consider certain criteria relating to the student's performance on an end-of-course test in determining whether the student is qualified to graduate. 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.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

C.S.H.B. 999 differs from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways by conforming to certain bill drafting conventions.

