

SUBJECT: Creating interim study on data collection on technology research

COMMITTEE: Technology, Economic Development, and Workforce — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 6 ayes — Strama, F. Brown, Button, Gattis, Harless, Rodriguez
0 nays
3 absent — Parker, Eissler, Ritter

WITNESSES: For — None
Against — None
On — Theresa Maldonado, Texas A&M University

DIGEST: CSHB 4329 would establish a select interim committee to study the feasibility of collecting data and maintaining a searchable electronic database to track specialized technology research projects conducted by public universities, public university research facilities, and other state institutions. The database would be to facilitate coordination among universities and facilities to improve access to and awareness of specialized research and technologies being developed. The committee would have to issue its findings and recommendations to the governor and the Legislature by December 1, 2010.

The committee would include representatives from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and representatives of the following institutions:

- The University of Texas at Austin;
- Texas A&M University;
- Texas Tech University;
- The University of Houston;
- The University of North Texas;
- The University of Texas at Arlington;
- The University of Texas at Dallas;

- The University of Texas at El Paso; and
- The University of Texas at San Antonio.

The study would consider potential entities able to administer the data collection, the extent of legislative oversight required of the entity, compliance with state and federal laws on access to public information, and the information the data collection would include.

In considering the information to be included, the study could consider a list of projects involving energy research, including methods of creation, storage, distributions, and conservation of energy; biomedical science research; nanotechnology research, including nanomedicine; or other specialized technology research.

The study would have to include for each project listed, a brief description, including field of technology and the entity involved with the project, as well as other relevant information and available resources in the state related to specialized technology research. This could include expert faculty or research personnel, available technology and patents obtained, the location and policies for the use of available research equipment, and public grants or contracts awarded.

The study would have to examine the current state of access to public information about specialized technology research projects and would have to assess methods of facilitating access to the information. It would consider what information should be accessible to the public and what information, if any, should have restricted access.

The committee would be abolished on January 16, 2011.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2009.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

A comprehensive database on technology research such as the bill proposes to study would promote collaboration and cooperation among Texas public institutions in the research and development sector. If the study recommendations included creating such a database, this would increase the national visibility of current research and grant awards at Texas universities. It would consolidate information, enabling researchers, potential investors, collaborators and students to quickly access crucial

data in multiple disciplines. A database would provide a comprehensive picture of research endeavors going on in Texas in one, central location. It could be expanded at some point in the future to include other disciplines.

It would provide an opportunity for the interim study committee members to consider the many different areas that a technology transfer database collection process could impact.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

The proposed legislation should include private higher education institutions and health-related institutions. These institutions also engage in extensive research endeavors. Including them would present a more complete picture of research efforts in Texas.

NOTES:

The substitute differs from the bill as filed by establishing an interim study committee to study the feasibility of collecting data related to specialized technology research in Texas, rather than requiring the THECB to establish such a database.