

SUBJECT: Authorizing creation of a mental health and brain research institute

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 9 ayes — Kuempel, Paul, Bucy, Burns, Clardy, Cole, M. González, Howard, Lalani

0 nays

2 absent — Burrows, Raney

WITNESSES: For — Joshua Shulman, Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children’s Hospital; Kathleen Otto, BioNTX; Andy Keller, Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (*Registered, but did not testify*: Kathy Green, AARP Texas; Anthony Haley, Baylor Scott & White Health System; Lindsey Adams, City of El Paso; Christine Bryan, Clarity Child Guidance Center; Garry Jones, DFER Texas; Glen Austin, Greater Houston Partnership; Daniel Hodge and Philip Horner, Houston Methodist Hospital; Nelda Hunter, Insightec Ltd.; Lindsay Lanagan, Legacy Community Health; Christine Yanas, Methodist Healthcare Ministries; Lyssette Galvan, NAMI Texas; Jennifer Rodriguez, North Texas Commission; Andrew Cates, Nurse Family Partnership; Nathan Cook, Rice University; Leticia Van de Putte, San Antonio Chamber of Commerce and Texas Academy of Physician Assistants; Maureen Milligan, Teaching Hospitals of Texas; Renzo Soto, Texas 2036; Deanna L. Kuykendall, Texas Alliance of Brain Injury Providers; Megan Mauro, Texas Association of Business; Meredith Cooke, Texas Children’s Hospital; Andrea Chevalier, Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education; Leela Rice, Texas Council of Community Centers; Cameron Duncan, Texas Hospital Association; Michelle Romero, Texas Medical Association; Jill Sutton, Texas Osteopathic Medical Association; Susana Carranza; Nadine Craddick)

Against — Judy Powell, Parent Guidance Center (*Registered, but did not testify*: Lee Spiller, Citizens Commission on Human Rights; Adam Cahn)

On — Kristen Doyle, Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas; Whitney Blanton, Texas Treasury Safekeeping Trust Company; Taiwo Babatope, UTHealth Houston; Eric Boerwinkle, UTHealth Houston (*Registered, but did not testify*: Wayne Roberts, CPRIT; Clarisse Roquemore, Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts)

DIGEST:

CSHJR 135 would amend the Texas Constitution to establish the Mental Health and Brain Research Institute of Texas. The institute would award grants to institutions of learning, advanced medical research facilities, public or private persons, and collaborations in Texas for the research of various mental and brain diseases and related conditions as well as other issues affecting mental health and the human brain. Such grants also would fund research to develop therapies, protocols, pharmaceuticals, or procedures for the cure or mitigation of all types of brain diseases and disorders. Additionally, grants would fund prevention programs and strategies to mitigate detrimental health impacts on the brain.

The resolution would require the institute to support institutions of learning and advanced medical research facilities and collaborations in the process of discovering the causes of mental and behavioral health issues, human brain-related diseases, developmental issues, and neurological health issues. The institute also would support such entities in the process of developing therapies, protocols, medical pharmaceuticals, or procedures for the cure or mitigation of mental health and brain diseases from laboratory research to clinical trials. Additionally, the institute would support the development of programs addressing access to advanced mental health and brain disease treatment. The institute would be required to establish appropriate standards and oversight bodies to ensure the proper use of authorized funding for brain research and facilities development.

The resolution would establish that members of the institute's governing and other decision-making bodies would serve six-year terms.

Mental Health and Brain Institute Research Fund. The resolution would establish the Mental Health and Brain Institute Research Fund as a

special fund in the state treasury. The resolution would require a \$3 billion transfer from the general revenue fund to the Mental Health and Brain Institute Research Fund on January 1, 2024. This transfer would not be an appropriation of state tax revenues and would expire on January 1, 2025. The fund would consist of transferred, appropriated, and credited money, gifts and grants, income received under a contract, and investment earnings and interest.

Grants. The Mental Health and Brain Research Institute of Texas could use money in the Mental Health and Brain Institute Research Fund only for:

- grants for mental health and brain research, research facilities, and research opportunities in the state to develop treatments for brain diseases or disorders;
- grants for the prevention of mental and behavioral health issues and substance use disorders and other addictions;
- institute approved purchase, construction, or renovation of facilities by or on behalf of a state agency or grant recipient; and
- operation of the institute.

A potential grant recipient would be required to possess funds equal to half the amount of the grant before the institute would be able to award the grant.

The ballot proposal would be presented to voters at an election on November 7, 2023, and would read: "The constitutional amendment requiring the creation of the Mental Health and Brain Research Institute of Texas, establishing the Mental Health and Brain Institute Research Fund to provide funding for mental health and brain research in this state, and transferring general revenue to the fund."

SUPPORTERS
SAY:

CSJHR 135 would act as the funding mechanism for CSHB 15 to establish the Mental Health and Brain Research Institute of Texas and the Mental Health and Brain Institute Research Fund. The constitutional amendment would allow Texas voters to choose to use the \$3 billion of

funding set forth in the resolution on researching and treating the mental health and brain diseases that impact everyone in the state. The resolution, in combination with CSHB 15, would help Texas by encouraging major investment in research to cure and treat mental health and brain diseases. Vulnerable populations in the state, such veterans and the elderly would benefit from increased access to high quality treatments and procedures. The Texas economy also would benefit from this expanded research and access, with hundreds of millions already being spent throughout the nation to treat mental health and brain diseases.

CRITICS
SAY:

The \$3 billion in funding set forth by the resolution is significant and could be better spent given directly to Texans.

NOTES:

HB 15 by S. Thompson, the enabling legislation for CSHJR 135, is set for second reading consideration today. According to the Legislative Budget Board, the cost to the state of the resolution would be about \$3 billion through the biennium ending August 31, 2025.