

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 621
By: Barrientos
Education
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As Filed

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Currently, minority students and students from rural areas are underrepresented in the professional and graduate schools of Texas state universities. As proposed, S.B. 621 sets forth ten criteria, any or all of which may be used in making admission and scholarship decisions, and prohibits universities from relying solely on scores from standardized tests in evaluating an applicant for admission into a graduate or professional program or in awarding a competitive scholarship.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1(Section 51.823, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 51, Education Code, by adding Subchapter V, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER V. ADMISSION AND SCHOLARSHIP POLICIES FOR GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

Sec. 51.821. DEFINITIONS. Defines “general academic teaching institution,” “graduate program,” and “professional program.”

Sec. 51.822. ADMISSION AND SCHOLARSHIP FACTORS FOR GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS. Requires a general academic teaching institution or medical or dental unit, in addition to any institutional, unit, professional, or accreditation factors, to consider all of, any of, or a combination of certain factors in making an admission or scholarship decision for admissions into or competitive scholarships for a graduate or professional program of the institution or unit. Prohibits the applicant’s performance on a standardized text from being used in the admissions or competitive scholarship process as the sole criterion for consideration of the applicant. Requires each general academic teaching institution or medical and dental unit, not later than one year before the date that applications for admissions and competitive scholarships are first considered for a graduate or professional program under this subchapter, to publish a description of the factors to be considered by the institution or unit in making those admissions and competitive scholarship decisions and to make the information available to the public. Provides that those requirements do not apply to admissions and competitive scholarships for the 2000 fall semester. Requires each institution or unit covered by this section to make the required information available to the public and to applicants to its graduate and professional programs not later than December 1, 1999, for the 2000 fall semester. Provides that this subsection expires September 1, 2000.

Sec. 51.823. RULEMAKING. Authorizes the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to adopt rules relating to the operation of admissions and competitive scholarship processes under this subchapter.

Sec. 51.824. REPORT. Requires each general academic teaching institution or medical and dental unit to report annually to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board the demographic composition of the entering class of students admitted and enrolled under this subchapter, according to race, ethnicity, and gender.

SECTION 2. Effective date: 90 days after adjournment.

Makes application of this Act prospective for the 2002-2003 academic year.

Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, each general academic teaching institution, and each medical and dental unit to adopt rules or policies relating to the admission of students and awarding of scholarships under Chapter 51V, Education Code, as added by this Act, not later than January 1, 2002.