

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.C.R. 3
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Infrastructure Development and Security
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As Filed

DIGEST

In the Homeland Security Act of 2002, the United States Congress recognized the importance of a university-based, integrated approach to homeland security when it required the secretary of the United States Department of Homeland Security to establish university-based centers for homeland security. Texas colleges and universities are at the forefront of research on issues pertaining to homeland security, including emergency response, food safety, transportation, border security, information protection, and counterterrorism and have joined together to maximize their abilities to meet state and national homeland security needs. The selection criteria established by congress for university-based centers for homeland security include expertise in training of first responders; response to incidents involving weapons of mass destruction and biological warfare; emergency and diagnostic medical services; chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear countermeasures and detection; animal and plant health and diagnostics; food safety; water and wastewater operations; port and waterway security; multi-modal transportation; information security and information engineering; engineering; educational outreach and technical assistance; border transportation and security; and public policy; these criteria are epitomized by the collective strengths of Texas colleges and universities. Texas institutions of higher education have been leaders on issues related to homeland security long before September 11, 2001, due to Texas' unique possession of large agricultural, petrochemical, maritime, and telecommunications industries and major land and sea ports on the border with Mexico and on the Gulf of Mexico, all of which are vulnerable to terrorist attack. The Homeland Security Act of 2002 required a university-based center or centers for homeland security to be established within one year of the date of enactment.

PURPOSE

As proposed, S.C.R. 3 submits the following resolutions:

Provides that the 78th Legislature of the State of Texas, 1st Called Session, hereby respectfully urge United States Department of Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge to recognize the expertise and resources represented by Texas colleges and universities by designating a university-based center for homeland security in the State of Texas. Provides that the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the secretary of the United States Department of Homeland Security, and to all members of the Texas congressional delegation.