

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
80R8047 KEL-D

S.B. 1860
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S/C on Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, there is a lack of nursing professionals in the state due to a lack of qualified faculty members at higher education institutions. Many nursing programs cannot admit qualified students because of inadequate resources necessary to recruit faculty members. Nursing programs at general academic institutions are funded at a lower weight than programs at health-related institutions. The new cost-based matrix being implemented exacerbates this situation because the weight for nursing programs is less with application of this formula than with application of the former formula.

As proposed, S.B. 1860 establishes a pilot project that funds general academic institution nursing programs at the same weight as health-related institutions. This bill also authorizes clinical nursing courses to have a student-faculty ratio of no more than 13:1.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, by adding Section 61.0592, as follows:

Sec. 61.0592. PILOT PROJECT REGARDING FUNDING FOR PROFESSIONAL NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAMS. (a) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to develop and implement a pilot project in which THECB, with respect to appropriations recommendations for the 2010-2011 state fiscal biennium for the professional nursing education programs that are offered by general academic teaching institutions that elect to participate in the project, uses certain funding formulas and percentages.

(b) Provides that, for purposes of Subsection (a), elements of funding formulas are comparable if they contain the same weights, models, scales, or rates, as applicable.

(c) Requires THECB to require a general academic teaching institution that elects to participate in the pilot project to perform certain tasks.

(d) Provides that any increase in a clinical faculty-to-student ratio in accordance with this section is not a ground for withdrawal of the approval of a professional nursing education program.

(e) Provides that this section expires December 31, 2012.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2007.