

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
81R36314 JRJ-D

C.S.H.B. 2425
By: Morrison (Averitt)
Higher Education
5/22/2009
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Current law requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to design and administer a one-week summer program to take place on the campus of each general academic teaching institution that offers an engineering degree program to expose middle school and high school students to mathematics, science, and engineering concepts they are likely to encounter in an engineering degree program and requires THECB to establish and administer a degree scholarship program for students who graduate with certain credentials. These requirements were enacted to address Texas' status as the ninth state among the 10 most populous states in the number of degrees awarded per 1,000 students in science and engineering fields. However, 25 percent of the bachelor's degrees awarded in Texas are from the private colleges and universities in Texas.

To encourage all Texas children to enroll in more mathematics and science classes, remain competitive on a national and global level in those fields of study, and increase the diversity of the program, the noncompetitive grant application procedure needs to be extended to the private colleges and universities.

C.S.H.B. 2425 amends current law relating to engineering recruitment programs at public or private institutions of higher education and to certain degree programs at public junior colleges.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 4 of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 61.791(a), Education Code, to require the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to establish and administer, using funds appropriated for that purpose, a one-week summer program to take place on the campus of each general academic teaching institution or private or independent institution of higher education that offers an engineering degree program.

SECTION 2. Amends Sections 61.792(a) and (b), Education Code, as follows:

(a) Requires THECB to establish and administer, using funds appropriated for that purpose, scholarships for students pursuing a degree in engineering at a general academic teaching institution or a private or independent institution of higher education.

(b) Requires a student, to qualify for a scholarship under this section, to maintain an overall grade point average of at least 3.0 on a four-point scale at the general academic teaching institution or the private or independent institution of higher education in which the student is enrolled, among certain other requirements.

SECTION 3. Amends Sections 130.0012, Education Code, by adding Subsection (k), as follows:

(k) Requires THECB to conduct a study relating to the success of baccalaureate degree programs offered under this section and to the feasibility of expanding the offering of baccalaureate degrees by public junior colleges. Requires that the study consider the economic viability of expanding the degree programs, the workforce needs served by the

degree programs for various areas of the state, current and potential university course offerings, and other methods for making baccalaureate degrees available, such as distance education programs and multi-institutional teaching centers. Requires THECB, not later than November 15, 2010, to report the results of the study to each standing committee of the legislature with primary jurisdiction over higher education. Provides that this subsection expires January 1, 2011.

SECTION 4. (a) Provides that Sections 61.791 and 61.792, Education Code, as amended by this Act, apply beginning with the 2009-2010 academic year.

(b) Requires THECB to adopt rules for the administration of Sections 61.791 and 61.792, Education Code, as amended by this Act, as soon as practicable after this Act takes effect. Authorizes THECB, for that purpose, to adopt the rules in the manner provided by law for emergency rules.

SECTION 5. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.