

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
83R6710 JRJ-F

S.B. 414
By: Ellis
Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Texas is facing a shortage of nurses. The Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies estimates the state's nursing programs need to increase the number of graduates to 25,000 by 2020 to meet the expected demand for nurses. This takes into account the impending retirement of the "baby boom" generation registered nurses. The need for additional nurses is especially important in the Houston region, home to the largest medical complex in the country. Other nursing school programs within the Texas Medical Center and the state of Texas are functioning at capacity.

Texas allows junior and community colleges to offer associate's degrees and a limited number of bachelor's degrees. Junior and community colleges can offer bachelor's degrees if they previously participated in a pilot program to offer bachelor's degrees.

S.B. 414 will allow some junior and community colleges to offer a Bachelor of Nursing degree to help meet the needs of the state. The change is restricted to those junior and community colleges that offer a degree program in nursing. The bill is bracketed to Harris County.

The projected cost of a Houston Community College Bachelor of Nursing degree is \$9,000, making it a cost-effective degree. The partnerships that Houston Community College has developed with the current nursing schools in the Houston area will not be adversely affected by this change because other nursing schools are operating at capacity with their Bachelor of Nursing programs.

As proposed, S.B. 414 amends current law relating to authorization by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for certain public junior colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs.

[**Note:** While the statutory reference in this bill is to the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System, the following amendments affect the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, as the successor agency to the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System.]

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 Section 130.0012, Education Code, by amending Subsections (b) and (g) and adding Subsection (g-1), as follows:

(b) Requires the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System (coordinating board) to authorize baccalaureate degree programs at:

(1) creates this subdivision from existing text and makes no further change to this subdivision;

(2) one or more public junior colleges that offer a degree program in the field of nursing if the public junior college is located in a county with a population greater than 3.3 million at the time the degree is initially offered.

(g) Requires the coordinating board, except as provided by Subsection (g-1), in its recommendations to the legislature relating to state funding for public junior colleges, to recommend that a public junior college receive substantially the same state support for junior-level and senior-level courses offered under this section as that provided to a general academic teaching institution for substantially similar courses.

(g-1) Authorizes a degree program created under Subsection (b)(2) to be funded solely by a public junior college's proportionate share of state appropriations under Section 130.003 (State Appropriations for Public Junior Colleges), local funds, and private sources. Provides that this subsection does not require the legislature to appropriate funds to support a degree program created under Subsection (b)(2).

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2013.