

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
83R25227 JRJ-F

C.S.S.B. 414
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Higher Education
5/1/2013
Committee Report (Substituted)

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.

C.S.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.

C.S.S.B. 414 amends current law relating to a study and report regarding authorizing certain public junior colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs to address regional workforce needs.

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 A, Chapter 130, Education Code, by adding Section 130.0013, as follows:

Sec. 130.0013. STUDY AND REPORT; BACCALAUREATE DEGREE PROGRAMS AUTHORITY. (a) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to conduct a study or regional workforce needs in this state to determine the regions of the state that would benefit from the authorization of baccalaureate degree programs at public junior colleges serving the region and appropriate metrics for determining whether a public junior college should offer those degree programs. Requires THECB, in conducting its study, to consult with at least one representative of each of the following:

- (1) four-year institutions of higher education;
- (2) two-year institutions of higher education;

- (3) regional businesses;
- (4) professional associations; and
- (5) any other entity the commissioner of higher education considers appropriate.

(b) Requires THECB, in conducting its study under this section, to consider the following factors in regard to a public junior college:

- (1) the need for the baccalaureate degree program in the region served by the public junior college;
- (2) how the degree program would complement or conflict with the other programs and course offerings of the public junior college;
- (3) whether the degree program would unnecessarily duplicate a degree program offered by other institutions of higher education;
- (4) whether an institution of higher education located in the same region as the public junior college has the capacity to offer the degree program;
- (5) the ability of the public junior college to support the degree program, including the adequacy of the public junior college's facilities, faculty, administration, libraries, and other resources;
- (6) the feasibility of the public junior college offering the degree program in collaboration with a general academic teaching institution under an articulation agreement;
- (7) the cost of the degree program to students enrolled in the program;
- (8) the availability and method of state funding to support the degree program;
- (9) the current licensure and accreditation standards under which the public junior college operates and the processes necessary to offer a baccalaureate degree program; and
- (10) any other metric THECB considers relevant.

(c) Requires THECB, not later than June 1, 2014, to submit to each legislative standing committee with primary jurisdiction over higher education the results of its study under this section and recommendation for legislative or other action.

(d) Provides that this section expires September 1, 2015.

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