

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
84R1115 KSD-D

S.B. 44
By: Zaffirini
Higher Education
2/6/2015
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The purpose of this legislation is to clarify that private gifts made to an institution of higher education to support undergraduate research activities are eligible for matching grants under the Texas Research Incentive Program (TRIP). Current law is silent as to whether private gifts made to institutions of higher education to support undergraduate research are eligible for matching funds under TRIP, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has interpreted this silence to mean that they are not. This interpretation is contrary to the original intent of the law and unduly restricts access to these funds by programs that could benefit from them.

S.B. 44 amends Section 62.123(a), Education Code, to add "undergraduate research" to the enumeration of grants expressly eligible for matching funds under TRIP, and amends Section 62.123(b), Education Code, to add "undergraduate financial aid" to the list of items expressly ineligible for such funds. As a result, more research is incentivized in a manner consistent with the spirit of the statute, but without the risk of ambiguity concerning whether financial aid is contemplated. This in turn would result in more private gifts being made to institutions of higher education, as potential donors would be motivated by the prospect of having gifts matched.

As proposed, S.B. 44 amends current law relating to matching private grants given to enhance additional research activities at institutions of higher education.

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 Sections 62.123(a) and (b), Education Code, as follows:

(a) Includes undergraduate research among the accepted purposes of enhancing research activities for which an institution may accept gifts or endowments from private sources and be entitled to receive a matching grant.

(b) Provides that an eligible institution is not entitled to matching funds under the program for undergraduate financial aid grants in addition to prohibited gifts or endowments set forth in this subdivision.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2015.