

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
86R22628 JRJ-D

H.B. 3601  
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Higher Education  
5/14/2019  
Engrossed

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Interested parties note the need for improved troop recruitment and retention by the Texas State Guard in order to meet Governor Abbott's mission to double the authorized forces of the Guard by year 2021.

H.B. 3601 creates educational incentives to address Texas military recruitment and retention by establishing the recognition of competency-based education degree plans for members of the Texas military forces. These programs consist of degree plans for associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees, and graduate degrees. Members must graduate from high school or have received a high school equivalent diploma, satisfy the minimum active military service obligation pertaining to the degree program, and complete and meet the standards of the degree plan. Under this bill, the active military service obligation for an associate degree is two years, four years for a baccalaureate degree, and six years for a graduate degree.

H.B. 3601 amends current law relating to the recognition by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board of competency-based education degree plans for members of the Texas military forces.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Section 61.0521, Education Code) of this bill.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, by adding Section 61.0521, as follows:

Sec. 61.0521. RECOGNITION OF COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION DEGREE PLANS FOR MEMBERS OF TEXAS MILITARY FORCES. (a) Defines "Texas military forces" for purposes of this section.

(b) Authorizes the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to approve an institution of higher education recognized by THECB to offer a degree in coordination with the Texas Military Department (TMD) that uses alternative methods of determining mastery of program content, including competency-based education.

(c) Requires a person, to be eligible for a degree approved under this section, to meet certain requirements.

(d) Authorizes THECB to propose rules to establish requirements under which a person's training and experience acquired during the person's military service serve as proof of the person's demonstration of subject matter knowledge if that training and experience are verified by the TMD.

SECTION 2. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the degree plans offered for enrollment for the 2020–2021 academic year

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2019.