

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 865
By: Schwertner
Subcommittee on Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In 2009, Texas State Technical College (TSTC) opened East Williamson County Higher Education Center (EWCHEC) in Hutto, Texas, in partnership with Temple College and Texas A&M University Central Texas (TAMUCT). TSTC owns the facility itself, housed within approximately 56 acres that TSTC owns, alongside Temple College and TAMUCT which lease space in the facility. Owing to the unique circumstances under which EWCHEC was created, TSTC's only statutory authorization to own and offer classes at EWCHEC stems from the contractual agreement between TSTC, Temple College, and TAMUCT entered into in 2009. (See Section 130.092, Education Code.) That contract has a 25-year term, approximately 14 years of which have now elapsed.

TSTC currently offers six programs at EWCHEC: precision machining technology; welding technology; HVAC technology; industrial systems; culinary arts; and cybersecurity. Recognizing the critical role they, alongside Temple College and TAMUCT, have in providing industry-based education and workforce development in the Central Texas region, the legislature passed S.B. 52, 87th Legislature, 3rd Called Special Session, authorizing TSTC to use CCAP funds for certain capital projects, one being a second facility at the EWCHEC site at a total cost of approximately \$57.4 million. Despite this, under current law, if and when that 25-year contract expires, TSTC will be forced to end its operations at both the existing and planned EWCHEC facilities.

S.B. 865 will secure TSTC's permanent presence in East Williamson County and ensure the continued operation of the new facility TSTC is constructing using state funds. By making TSTC's presence in East Williamson County permanent in statute, and granting TSTC additional authority to construct, procure, maintain and operate additional sites in East Williamson County, the legislature will support continued economic development and workforce training in one of the fastest growing regions in Texas.

As proposed, S.B. 865 amends current law relating to a campus of the Texas State Technical College System located in Williamson County.

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 135.02(a), Education Code, as follows:

(a) Provides that the Texas Technical College System is composed of certain campuses, including a campus that operates as a collective unit of one or more locations in Williamson County east of State Highway 130 and Interstate Highway 35. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2023.