

By: Bucy

H.B. No. 433

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the establishment of the Higher Education and
Corrections Council.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Subtitle B, Title 3, Education Code, is amended
by adding Chapter 64 to read as follows:

CHAPTER 64. HIGHER EDUCATION AND CORRECTIONS COUNCIL

SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 64.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Career school or college" has the meaning
assigned by Section 132.001.

(2) "Coordinating board" means the Texas Higher
Education Coordinating Board.

(3) "Council" means the Higher Education and
Corrections Council.

(4) "Department" means the Texas Department of
Criminal Justice.

(5) "Institution of higher education" has the meaning
assigned by Section 61.003.

SUBCHAPTER B. ESTABLISHMENT OF COUNCIL

Sec. 64.051. ESTABLISHMENT. The Higher Education and
Corrections Council is established to help coordinate and make
recommendations to the coordinating board and the department
regarding educational opportunities for incarcerated individuals.

1 Sec. 64.052. COUNCIL MEMBERS. (a) The council consists of
2 the following 11 members:

3 (1) a member of the house of representatives appointed
4 by the speaker of the house of representatives;

5 (2) a member of the senate appointed by the lieutenant
6 governor;

7 (3) the following members appointed by the
8 commissioner of higher education:

9 (A) an employee of the coordinating board;

10 (B) an employee of a career school or college;

11 (C) an employee of an institution of higher
12 education;

13 (D) a researcher who studies higher education in
14 correctional facilities;

15 (E) a formerly incarcerated individual who
16 participated in higher education programs while incarcerated in a
17 prison in this state; and

18 (F) the executive director of a nonprofit
19 organization engaged in criminal justice work in this state or the
20 executive director's designee;

21 (4) the executive director of the department or the
22 executive director's designee;

23 (5) an employee of the department appointed by the
24 executive director of the department; and

25 (6) the executive director of the Texas Workforce
26 Commission or the executive director's designee.

27 (b) A council member serves at the will of the appointing

1 authority.

2 Sec. 64.053. MEMBER TERMS. Council members serve staggered
3 two-year terms, with six members' terms expiring February 1 of each
4 odd-numbered year and five members' terms expiring February 1 of
5 each even-numbered year.

6 Sec. 64.054. VACANCY. A vacancy on the council is filled in
7 the same manner as the initial appointment.

8 Sec. 64.055. CO-CHAIRS. The council members appointed by
9 the speaker of the house of representatives and the lieutenant
10 governor serve as co-chairs of the council.

11 Sec. 64.056. COMPENSATION; REIMBURSEMENT. A council member
12 is not entitled to compensation or reimbursement of expenses
13 incurred in performing council duties.

14 SUBCHAPTER C. DUTIES OF COUNCIL

15 Sec. 64.101. GENERAL DUTIES. The council shall:

16 (1) coordinate, facilitate, and support the delivery
17 of higher education in correctional facilities in this state to
18 prepare incarcerated individuals for integration and productive
19 employment on release;

20 (2) explore and make recommendations for the efficient
21 and effective delivery of higher education programs to incarcerated
22 individuals, including:

23 (A) evidence-based practices and technologies;

24 (B) methods of maximizing and facilitating
25 access to educational programs;

26 (C) methods of supporting and facilitating
27 timely completion of courses and certificate and degree programs;

1 (D) methods of emphasizing educational programs

2 that:

3 (i) align with current and future workforce
4 demands in this state;

5 (ii) lead to occupations that are
6 accessible to formerly incarcerated individuals;

7 (iii) provide sustainable wages after
8 release; and

9 (iv) maximize accessibility and timely
10 completion during incarceration;

11 (E) use of cross-institutional coursework
12 application toward certificate and degree programs;

13 (F) use of coursework that encourages personal
14 and civic development; and

15 (G) methods of leveraging innovative course
16 delivery, including technology resources;

17 (3) explore methods and make recommendations for the
18 collection and analysis of critical data regarding:

19 (A) enrollment and completion of higher
20 education courses, credentials, and certificate and degree
21 programs;

22 (B) federal and state student aid awarded to
23 incarcerated individuals;

24 (C) costs of higher education in correctional
25 facilities, including any recommendations for continued
26 improvement; and

27 (D) outcomes of formerly incarcerated

1 individuals who participated in higher education programming
2 during incarceration and are on parole, including recidivism,
3 employment, and post-release higher education engagement; and

4 (4) make recommendations regarding legislative
5 appropriations requests to support the council's purposes and
6 objectives.

7 Sec. 64.102. REPORT. Not later than November 1 of each
8 even-numbered year, the council shall submit to the legislature,
9 the coordinating board, and the department a report regarding the
10 council's duties under this chapter during the preceding two years
11 and any recommendations for legislative or other action. The
12 report must include:

13 (1) the number of incarcerated individuals enrolled in
14 higher education; and

15 (2) the number of incarcerated individuals who
16 received a certificate or degree.

17 SECTION 2. As soon as practicable after the effective date
18 of this Act, the appointing authorities shall make the initial
19 appointments required under Section 64.052, Education Code, as
20 added by this Act.

21 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
22 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
23 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
24 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
25 Act takes effect September 1, 2025.