

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 800
By: Madla
Subcommittee on Higher Education
7/14/2003
Enrolled

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Historically, the southern sector of San Antonio has had limited access to certain higher educational opportunities. The Texas A&M Palo Alto Education Center System opened in the fall of 2000 on the campus of Alamo Community College District. Within two years, enrollment grew from 126 to 550 students, 44 percent of whom are full-time students. The Palo Alto campus, built for 2,500 students, currently serves 7,500, in addition to the 550 students in the A&M center. The majority of the center's classes are being held in portable buildings, more of which are needed. S.B. 800 expedites the opening of Texas A&M University -- San Antonio and Texas A&M University--Central Texas. The bill also provides for issuing bonds to fund development of a biosciences research center in Temple, through Texas A&M University System Health Science Center.

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 Chapter 87, Education Code, by adding Subchapter K, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER K. TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY -- SAN ANTONIO

Sec. 87.841. TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY -- SAN ANTONIO. (a) Provides that Texas A&M University -- San Antonio is a general academic teaching institution in Bexar County and a component of The Texas A&M University System under the management and control of The Texas A&M University System's board of regents (board).

(b) Authorizes the board to prescribe courses that lead to degrees customarily offered at leading American universities, and to award those degrees, including baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees in all fields of study. Prohibits any department, school, or degree program from being instituted without prior approval of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).

(c) Provides that the board has the same powers and duties concerning Texas A&M University -- San Antonio as it does concerning Texas A&M University.

(d) Prohibits Texas A&M University -- San Antonio from operating as a general academic teaching institution until THECB certifies enrollment has reached the equivalent of 2,500 full-time students for one semester.

SECTION 2. Amends Chapter 87, Education Code, by adding Subchapter L, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER L. TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY--CENTRAL TEXAS

Sec. 87.861. TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY--CENTRAL TEXAS. (a) Provides that Texas A&M University--Central Texas is a general academic teaching institution located in Bell County. Provides that the university is a component institution of The Texas A&M University System and is under the management and control of the board of regents

of The Texas A&M University System.

(b) Authorizes the board to prescribe courses leading to such customary degrees as are offered at leading American universities and to award those degrees. Authorizes those degrees to include baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees in all fields of study, including professional degrees. Authorizes no department, school, or degree program to be instituted except with the prior THECB approval.

(c) Provides that the board also has the same powers and duties concerning Texas A&M University--Central Texas as are conferred on the board by statute concerning Texas A&M University.

(d) Prohibits Texas A&M University--Central Texas, notwithstanding any other provision of this subchapter, from operating as a general academic teaching institution until THECB certifies that enrollment at the Tarleton State University System Center--Central Texas in Killeen has reached an enrollment equivalent of 2,500 full-time students for one semester.

SECTION 3. Amends Subchapter B, Chapter 55, Education Code, by adding Section 55.1741, as follows:

Sec. 55.1741. THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM; ADDITIONAL REVENUE BONDS. (a) Authorizes the board, in addition to the other authority granted by this subchapter, to acquire, purchase, construct, improve, renovate, enlarge, or equip property, buildings, structures, or other facilities, including roads and related infrastructure, for The Texas A&M University System Health Science Center to develop a biosciences research center in the City of Temple, to be financed by the issuance of bonds in accordance with this subchapter, including bonds issued in accordance with a systemwide revenue financing program and secured as provided by that program, in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$15 million.

(b) Authorizes the board to pledge irrevocably to the payment of the bonds authorized by this section all or any part of the revenue funds of an institution, branch, or entity of The Texas A&M University System, including student tuition charges. Prohibits the amount of a pledge made under this subsection from being reduced or abrogated while the bonds for which the pledge is made, or bonds issued to refund those bonds, are outstanding.

(c) Authorizes the board, if sufficient funds are not available to the board of regents to meet its obligations under this section, to transfer funds among institutions, branches, and entities of The Texas A&M University System to ensure the most equitable and efficient allocation of available resources for each institution, branch, or entity to carry out its duties and purposes.

(d) Provides that if the Temple Health and Bioscience Economic Development District is established, the district is responsible for the payment of debt service on the bonds authorized by this section for any facilities financed by the bonds that are located in the district and used to support the purposes or programs of the district.

(e) Prohibits the legislature from appropriating general revenue to pay, or to reimburse the board of regents or Texas A&M University for the payment of, debt service on bonds authorized by this section.

SECTION 4. Provides that Section 61.056, Education Code (Review of Legislation Establishing Additional Institutions), does not apply to this Act. Provides that this Act does not affect the board's authority to operate a system center or branch campus of any component institution of The Texas A&M University System in Bexar County or Bell County.

SECTION 5. Repealer: Subchapter J, Chapter 87 (Public University for Central Texas), Education Code.

SECTION 6. Sets forth the legislative intent regarding Texas A&M University--Central Texas.

SECTION 7. Provides that in accordance with Article VII, Section 18(c), Texas Constitution (Texas A&M University System; University of Texas System; Bonds or Notes Payable from Income of Available University Fund), if this Act receives a two-thirds vote of all members elected to each house, Texas A&M University -- San Antonio will be entitled to participate in the funding provided by Article VII, Section 18, Texas Constitution (Texas A&M University System; University of Texas System; Bonds or Notes Payable from Income of Available University Fund).

SECTION 8. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2003.