

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1297
By: Ogden
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's plan for higher education, *Closing the Gaps*, states that the number of students attending college in central Texas will increase by 50,000 in the next 10 to 12 years. Southwest Texas State University and The University of Texas at Austin are moving toward slowing their growth. Currently, the Round Rock Higher Education Center (RRHEC), which includes Southwest Texas State University, Austin Community College, and Temple College at Taylor, serves about 1,800 students and is expected to serve twice as many by 2005. RRHEC needs a permanent campus and the capacity to meet the expanding educational needs of one of the fastest growing areas of the state. Additionally, current Williamson County residents have to drive either to Austin or San Marcos to attend an institution of higher education. SB 1297 authorizes the board of regents of the Texas State University System to issue revenue bonds, not to exceed \$27 million, to finance a multi-institutional facility in Williamson County. This bill also authorizes the University of North Texas System to issue bonds, up to a certain amount, to develop the University of North Texas System Center at Dallas, which will become the University of North Texas at Dallas.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 55.1735(a), Education Code, to include a science building and development of the campus and facilities of the University of North Texas System Center at Dallas at the location to become the University of North Texas at Dallas, as a project for which the board of regents of the University of North Texas System is authorized to issue bonds up to a certain amount.

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter B, Chapter 55, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 55.1744, as follows:

Sec. 55.1744. SOUTHWEST TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY; ADDITIONAL BONDS.

(a) Authorizes the board of regents of the Texas State University System (board), in addition to the other authority granted by this subchapter, to issue bonds in accordance with this subchapter, in the aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$27 million, to finance the acquisition, purchase, construction, improvement, renovation, enlargement, or equipping of property or related infrastructure for a multi-institutional education center in Williamson County for Southwest Texas State University to offer educational programs, support activities, and provide facilities for other educational entities to further institutional efficiency and coordinate educational programs.

(b) Authorizes the board to pledge irrevocably, to the payment of those bonds, all

or any part of the revenue of the Southwest Texas State 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.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 61.0572(e), Education Code, to include a reference to Section 55.1744.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 61.058(b), Education Code, to include a reference to Section 55.1744.

SECTION 5. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2003.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2003.