

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 495
By: Miller
Higher Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

There were no public upper-level higher education opportunities within a one-hour drive of Bell County until the 75th Texas Legislature created the state's first university system center by enacting S.B. 572 in 1997. By the spring of 2004, Tarleton State University System Center (Tarleton-CT) enrolled 1,983 students--an increase of 56 percent since Tarleton-CT opened its doors in the fall of 1999. In the five years it has been open, Tarleton-CT has produced 2,006 graduates.

Tarleton-CT, located in Killeen, was the first university system center created by the state using the pathway model. This model is designed to provide higher education opportunities in fast-growing geographical areas where opportunities for post secondary education are not readily available. The Texas Education Code requires that Tarleton-CT enroll at least 2,500 full-time students in order to become a stand-alone institution.

While the relationship between Tarleton State University and Tarleton-CT has been beneficial to both institutions, many people in the Bell County community believe that Tarleton-CT (Texas A&M University-Central Texas) has a better chance of succeeding and growing as stand-alone institution.

CSHB 495 expedites the opening of Texas A&M University-Central Texas by lowering the threshold to 1,000 full-time equivalent students (FTEs), similar to that required of the University of North Texas-Dallas.

CSHB 495 also makes clear that Texas A&M University--Central Texas is not eligible to receive the small institution supplement under the Texas higher Education Coordinating Board's General Academic Instruction and Operations Formula during the state fiscal biennium.

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 - Reduces the enrollment requirement from 2,500 to 1,000 full-time equivalent students in order for Tarleton State University System Center--Central Texas in Killeen, Texas to be certified by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board as a general academic teaching institution and to operate as Texas A&M University--Central Texas.

States that Texas A&M University--Central Texas is not eligible to receive the small institution supplement under the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's General Academic Instruction and Operations Formula during the state fiscal biennium. This provision expires September 1, 2007.

SECTION 2 - Effective date.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a two-thirds vote of all 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, 2005.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

The substitute adds that Texas A&M University--Central Texas is not eligible to receive the small institution supplement until the expiration of this provision on September 1, 2007.