

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 868
By: Ritter
Higher Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Current law does not provide for a research center that specializes in deaf education. The deaf education program at Lamar University has gained both regional and national attention for the quality of its programs and the preparation and accomplishments of its graduates. Lamar is the only institution in Texas, and only one of seven schools in the nation, that offers a doctoral degree in Deaf Education. Collegial relationships among the deaf education, audiology, and speech-language pathology programs at Lamar University offer many unique collaborative opportunities for the study of these communication areas. These programs provide students, faculty, colleagues, citizens, and community leaders with a wide array of educational and research benefits.

CSHB 868 designates that the deaf education aspect of the Department of Communications Disorders and Deaf Education will be named the Lamar University Center for Excellence in Deaf Studies and Deaf Education. This change will allow the university to receive grants and outside funding sources for the purpose of deaf education that the university is currently not able to obtain. The establishment of the Lamar University Center for Excellence in Deaf Studies and Deaf Education is in name only and should have no fiscal impact to the state.

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 - Directs the Texas State University Board of Regents to establish the Lamar University Center for Excellence in Deaf Studies and Deaf Education and sets forth requirements for the center.

SECTION 2 - Directs the board to establish the Lamar University Center for Excellence in Deaf Studies and Deaf Education, subject to funding availability, not later than January 1, 2007.

SECTION 3 - 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 changes the name of the center and makes other corresponding changes in the Act. The substitute deletes language that states that the board shall provide for the employment of a staff and an operating budget, and that an employee of the center is an employee of the Texas State University System. The substitute also removes language that allows the center to enter into an agreement with a public or private institution to perform research for the center.