

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 730
By: West, Royce
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex is the largest metropolitan region in the United States without a public law school.

S.B. 730 authorizes the University of North Texas System to conduct a feasibility study regarding the creation of the first public law school to be located in Dallas. The bill authorizes the establishment and operation of a law school to be administered by the board of regents of the University of North Texas System until the University of North Texas at Dallas has been administered as an independent institution of higher education for five years. After that time, the law school will become a professional school of 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 Subchapter J, Chapter 105, Education Code, by adding Section 105.502, as follows:

Sec. 105.502. UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS SYSTEM SCHOOL OF LAW. (a) Authorizes the board of regents of the University of North Texas System (board) to establish and operate a school of law in Dallas as a professional school of the University of North Texas System (UNT System).

(b) Authorizes the board, in administering the law school, to prescribe courses leading to customary degrees offered at other leading American schools of law and to award those degrees.

(c) Requires the board to administer the law school as a professional school of the UNT System, until the University of North Texas at Dallas (UNT Dallas) has been administered as a general academic teaching institution for five years. Requires the law school, after that period, to become a professional school of UNT Dallas. Provides that the law school is entitled to formula funding as if the law school were a professional school of a general academic teaching institution, until the law school becomes a professional school of UNT Dallas.

(d) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, no later than June 1, 2006, to prepare a feasibility study to determine the actions UNT must take to obtain accreditation of the law school. Requires the coordinating board to deliver a copy of the study to the chairs of each legislative standing committee and subcommittee with jurisdiction over higher education.

SECTION 2. Effective date:

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, 2005.