

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.C.R. 159  
By: Morrison  
Higher Education  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

In 2000, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) issued its 15-year master plan for higher education; Closing the Gaps by 2015 includes four specific goals relating to increasing participation rates, achieving higher levels of identifiable student success, increasing the number of nationally recognized programs at Texas colleges and universities, and increasing the level of federal science and engineering research funding. Though some progress toward achieving the benchmarks established in Closing the Gaps, a July 2006 THECB progress report acknowledges recent trends that suggest it is unlikely the goals will be accomplished by 2015.

The purpose of H.C.R. 159 is to create a select commission on higher education and global competitiveness to draft a Texas Compact with a vision and plan to raise Texas' level of education to the level of the highest performing competitor states and nations and serve the higher education needs of differing regions in Texas, giving Texas higher education institutions global recognition. The commission will also examine Texas's global competitiveness and determine how to enhance and structure higher education to achieve goals of educational attainment and economic competitiveness.

### **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**

HCR 159 provides that a select commission on higher education and global competitiveness be created by the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the speaker of the house of representatives. The committee shall draft a Texas Compact that reflects a long-term vision and step-by step plan to attain specific goals by 2020 including educating the population of Texas to levels comparable to the highest performing competitor states and nations, achieving global recognition for Texas public colleges and universities for excellence in their core missions and for innovations that strengthen the state's economy and improve the quality of life for its citizens, and serving different regions of Texas in ways that respond to each region's unique higher education needs.

The commission shall examine current trends in educational attainment in Texas and competitor states and nations and the potential impact of those trends on the state's long-term economic competitiveness and quality of life. The commission shall examine objectives and accountability measures related to the state's educational attainment goals, including performance benchmarks comparing the best performing programs in Texas with the best performing programs in competitor states and nations. The commission shall examine how to enhance regional support for higher education and strengthen the link between higher education and regional economic development goals, how to improve the number of Texas adults attaining postsecondary credentials, and strengthening the role and performance of Texas community colleges.

The commission shall examine how to structure funding to reward student and institutional outcomes that are aligned with state and regional priorities and how to increase the quantity, quality, and commercialization of university-based research. The commission shall assess long-term higher education capacity needs and creative approaches to meeting those needs. Finally, the commission shall examine how to create policy research mechanisms to track, analyze and

make recommendations to state policy makers based on the state's progress in achieving goals with respect to educational attainment and economic competitiveness.

The commission would be composed of 15 members including five members appointed by the governor, five members appointed by the lieutenant governor and five members appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives. In appointing members to this commission, efforts shall be made to include representatives from the business community, academia, and experts with an interest in higher education and future workforce needs.

The commission shall submit a full report to the governor and legislature by November 1, 2008, which will include findings, recommendations, a plan and timeline for implementing the recommendations and any enabling legislation.

#### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

No effective date.