

1-1 By: Morrison (Senate Sponsor - Shapleigh) H.C.R. No. 159
1-2 (In the Senate - Received from the House April 19, 2007;
1-3 April 26, 2007, read first time and referred to Committee on
1-4 Education; May 8, 2007, reported favorably by the following vote:
1-5 Yeas 5, Nays 0; May 8, 2007, sent to printer.)

1-6 HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1-7 WHEREAS, In 2000, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating
1-8 Board (THECB) issued its 15-year master plan for higher education
1-9 as required by statute; *Closing the Gaps by 2015* includes four
1-10 specific goals relating to increasing participation rates,
1-11 achieving higher levels of identifiable student success,
1-12 increasing the number of nationally recognized programs at Texas
1-13 colleges and universities, and increasing the level of federal
1-14 science and engineering research funding; and

1-15 WHEREAS, While Texas has made some progress toward achieving
1-16 the benchmarks established in *Closing the Gaps*, a July 2006 THECB
1-17 progress report acknowledges recent trends that suggest it is
1-18 unlikely the goals will be accomplished by 2015; the rate of growth
1-19 in enrollment has been declining among most ethnic groups since the
1-20 fall of 2002, and institutional enrollment targets are well short
1-21 of the state's 2010 goal--by 50,000 students overall and by 100,000
1-22 for Hispanic students; and

1-23 WHEREAS, Moreover, the number of bachelor's degrees and
1-24 technology-related degrees awarded fell short of the 2005 targets,
1-25 and the number of mathematics and science teaching certificates
1-26 awarded actually declined between 2000 and 2005; while Texas has
1-27 made gains in securing federal research funding, THECB reports that
1-28 the significant gap between California and New York and Texas
1-29 remains essentially unchanged, both in terms of dollar amounts
1-30 awarded and in the percentage of total federal funding awarded for
1-31 science and engineering research and development; and

1-32 WHEREAS, The consequences of failing to meet the benchmarks
1-33 established by THECB are considerable; in compiling data for its
1-34 annual Global Competitiveness Report, the World Economic Forum
1-35 (WEF) assigns significant value to a nation's higher education
1-36 system as one of the key indicators of a country's ability to
1-37 sustain growth and remain economically competitive; the WEF takes
1-38 particular interest in the quality of science and mathematics
1-39 education and advises that today's global economy mandates a
1-40 well-educated, specially trained workforce; and

1-41 WHEREAS, Unfortunately, the 2006-2007 WEF report indicates
1-42 that the United States' economic competitiveness fell
1-43 significantly over the last year, with this decline due in part to
1-44 low education standards; coupled with the THECB *Closing the Gaps*
1-45 progress report, this assessment from the WEF makes it clear that
1-46 Texas must improve its pursuit of educational excellence to better
1-47 prepare the workforce of the future and avoid a decline in its own
1-48 economic competitiveness; and

1-49 WHEREAS, To meet these objectives, Texas must develop a
1-50 framework of state policy that encourages institutions of higher
1-51 education to focus on their core missions, engage regional civic,
1-52 business, and academic leaders to address local and statewide
1-53 economic priorities, and establish globally recognized centers of
1-54 excellence in education; now, therefore, be it

1-55 RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas
1-56 hereby requests that the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the
1-57 speaker of the house of representatives create a select commission
1-58 on higher education and global competitiveness to draft a Texas
1-59 Compact that reflects a long-term vision and step-by-step plan to
1-60 attain the following goals by 2020:

1-61 (1) educating the population of Texas to levels
1-62 comparable to the highest performing competitor states and nations;

1-63 (2) achieving global recognition for Texas public
1-64 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

(3) serving different regions of Texas in ways that respond to each region's unique higher education needs; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the commission examine the following issues related to global competitiveness in educational attainment:

(1) 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;

(2) 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;

(3) enhancing regional support for higher education and strengthening the link between higher education and regional economic development goals;

(4) improving the number of Texas adults attaining postsecondary credentials and strengthening the role and performance of Texas' community colleges;

(5) structuring higher education funding to reward student and institutional outcomes that are aligned with state and regional priorities;

(6) increasing the quantity, quality, and commercialization of university-based research;

(7) assessing long-term higher education capacity needs and creative approaches to meeting those needs;

(8) creating a policy research mechanism 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; and

(9) the effect of tuition deregulation and higher tuition rates on participation in higher education, and whether tuition deregulation and higher tuition rates have adversely affected participation in higher education by minority or rural students; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the commission be composed of 15 members, with a presiding officer elected by its members, to include:

(1) five members appointed by the governor;

(2) five members appointed by the lieutenant governor; and

(3) five members appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That in making appointments to the commission, efforts be made to include representatives from the business community and academia and other experts with interest in higher education and current and future workforce needs and to include representatives that reflect the demographic diversity of this state; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the commission submit a full report, including findings, recommendations, a plan and timeline for implementing the recommendations, and enabling legislation, to the governor and the legislature by November 1, 2008.

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