

1-1 By: Shapleigh S.C.R. No. 47  
1-2 (In the Senate - Filed March 21, 2007; March 27, 2007, read  
1-3 first time and referred to Subcommittee on Higher Education;  
1-4 April 27, 2007, reported favorably from Committee on Education by  
1-5 the following vote: Yeas 7, Nays 0; April 27, 2007, sent to  
1-6 printer.)

1-7 SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

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

1-16 WHEREAS, While Texas has made some progress toward achieving  
1-17 the benchmarks established in *Closing the Gaps*, a July 2006 Texas  
1-18 Higher Education Coordinating Board progress report acknowledges  
1-19 recent trends that suggest it is unlikely the goals will be  
1-20 accomplished by 2015; the rate of growth in enrollment has been  
1-21 declining among most ethnic groups since the fall of 2002, and  
1-22 institutional enrollment targets are well short of the state's 2010  
1-23 goal--by 50,000 students overall and by 100,000 for Hispanic  
1-24 students; and

1-25 WHEREAS, Moreover, the number of bachelor's degrees and  
1-26 technology-related degrees awarded fell short of the 2005 targets,  
1-27 and the number of mathematics and science teaching certificates  
1-28 awarded actually declined between 2000 and 2005; while Texas has  
1-29 made gains in securing federal research funding, the Texas Higher  
1-30 Education Coordinating Board reports that the significant gap  
1-31 between California and New York and Texas remains essentially  
1-32 unchanged, both in terms of dollar amounts awarded and in the  
1-33 percentage of total federal funding awarded for science and  
1-34 engineering research and development; and

1-35 WHEREAS, The consequences of failing to meet the benchmarks  
1-36 established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board are  
1-37 considerable; in compiling data for its annual Global  
1-38 Competitiveness Report, the World Economic Forum assigns  
1-39 significant value to a nation's higher education system as one of  
1-40 the key indicators of a country's ability to sustain growth and  
1-41 remain economically competitive; the World Economic Forum takes  
1-42 particular interest in the quality of science and mathematics  
1-43 education and advises that today's global economy mandates a  
1-44 well-educated, specially trained workforce; and

1-45 WHEREAS, Unfortunately, the 2006-2007 World Economic Forum  
1-46 report indicates that the United States' economic competitiveness  
1-47 fell significantly over the last year, with this decline due in part  
1-48 to low education standards; coupled with the Texas Higher Education  
1-49 Coordinating Board *Closing the Gaps* progress report, this  
1-50 assessment from the World Economic Forum makes it clear that Texas  
1-51 must improve its pursuit of educational excellence to better  
1-52 prepare the workforce of the future and avoid a decline in its own  
1-53 economic competitiveness; and

1-54 WHEREAS, To meet these objectives, Texas must develop a  
1-55 framework of state policy that encourages institutions of higher  
1-56 education to focus on their core missions, engage regional civic,  
1-57 business, and academic leaders to address local and statewide  
1-58 economic priorities, and establish globally recognized centers of  
1-59 excellence in education; now, therefore, be it

1-60 RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas  
1-61 hereby request that the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the  
1-62 speaker of the house of representatives create a select commission  
1-63 on higher education and global competitiveness to draft a Texas  
1-64 Compact that reflects a long-term vision and step-by-step plan to

2-1 attain the following goals by 2020:  
 2-2 (1) educating the population of Texas to levels  
 2-3 comparable to the highest performing competitor states and nations;  
 2-4 (2) achieving global recognition for Texas public  
 2-5 colleges and universities for excellence in their core missions and  
 2-6 for innovations that strengthen the state's economy and improve the  
 2-7 quality of life for its citizens; and  
 2-8 (3) serving different regions of Texas in ways that  
 2-9 respond to each region's unique higher education needs; and, be it  
 2-10 further

2-11 RESOLVED, That the commission examine the following issues  
 2-12 related to global competitiveness in educational attainment:

2-13 (1) current trends in educational attainment in Texas  
 2-14 and competitor states and nations and the potential impact of those  
 2-15 trends on the state's long-term economic competitiveness and  
 2-16 quality of life;

2-17 (2) objectives and accountability measures related to  
 2-18 the state's educational attainment goals, including performance  
 2-19 benchmarks comparing the best performing programs in Texas with the  
 2-20 best performing programs in competitor states and nations;

2-21 (3) enhancing regional support for higher education  
 2-22 and strengthening the link between higher education and regional  
 2-23 economic development goals;

2-24 (4) improving the number of Texas adults attaining  
 2-25 postsecondary credentials and strengthening the role and  
 2-26 performance of Texas' community colleges;

2-27 (5) structuring higher education funding to reward  
 2-28 student and institutional outcomes that are aligned with state and  
 2-29 regional priorities;

2-30 (6) increasing the quantity, quality, and  
 2-31 commercialization of university-based research;

2-32 (7) assessing long-term higher education capacity  
 2-33 needs and creative approaches to meeting those needs; and

2-34 (8) creating a policy research mechanism to track,  
 2-35 analyze, and make recommendations to state policy makers based on  
 2-36 the state's progress in achieving goals with respect to educational  
 2-37 attainment and economic competitiveness; and, be it further

2-38 RESOLVED, That the commission be composed of 15 members, with  
 2-39 a presiding officer elected by its members, to include:

2-40 (1) five members appointed by the governor;

2-41 (2) five members appointed by the lieutenant governor;

2-42 and  
 2-43 (3) five members appointed by the speaker of the house  
 2-44 of representatives; and, be it further

2-45 RESOLVED, That in making appointments to the commission,  
 2-46 efforts be made to include representatives from the business  
 2-47 community and academia and other experts with interest in higher  
 2-48 education and current and future workforce needs; and, be it  
 2-49 further

2-50 RESOLVED, That the commission submit a full report, including  
 2-51 findings, recommendations, a plan and timeline for implementing the  
 2-52 recommendations, and enabling legislation, to the governor and the  
 2-53 legislature by November 1, 2008.

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