

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 3645
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Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Under current law, graduate teaching assistants, assistant instructors, and research assistants working toward their PhDs are discouraged from applying for major research fellowships that could bring hundreds of thousands of dollars to Texas public universities, because, by accepting a fully funded fellowship, many graduate employees would lose employee health benefits provided with teaching assistantships.

H.B. 3645 establishes that an individual is eligible to participate in the state employees group benefits program or in the uniform insurance benefits program for employees of The University of Texas System and The Texas A&M University System as if the individual were an employee, regardless of whether the individual actually serves as an employee, if the individual holds a postdoctoral fellowship or other fellowships awarded to the individual on a competitive basis that are valued, either singly or in combination, at not less than \$10,000 at an institution of higher education.

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

H.B. 3645 amends the Insurance Code to establish that an individual is eligible to participate in the state employees group benefits program or in the uniform insurance benefits program for employees of The University of Texas System and The Texas A&M University System as if the individual were an employee, regardless of whether the individual actually serves as an employee, if the individual holds a postdoctoral fellowship or holds other fellowships awarded to the individual on a competitive basis that, either singly or in combination, are valued at not less than \$10,000 at an institution of higher education.

H.B. 3645 requires the Employees Retirement System of Texas board of trustees to include coverage as added by the bill in an insurance policy or contract or evidence of coverage delivered, issued for delivery, or renewed on or after January 1, 2010. The bill authorizes the board to include coverage in an insurance policy or contract or an evidence of coverage delivered, issued for delivery, or renewed before January 1, 2010, if the board determines that the coverage may reasonably be included. The bill requires the governing board of The University of Texas System or The Texas A&M University System, as applicable, to include coverage as added by the bill in an insurance policy or contract or evidence of coverage delivered, issued for delivery, or renewed on or after January 1, 2010. The bill allows the governing board of a system to include coverage in an insurance policy or contract or an evidence of coverage delivered, issued for delivery, or renewed before January 1, 2010, if the governing board determines that the coverage may reasonably be included.

H.B. 3645 repeals Section 1601.101(d), Insurance Code, and makes the repeal effective January

1, 2010.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Except as otherwise provided, September 1, 2009.