

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 525
By: Nelson
Public Health
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Under the federal Conrad 30 program, each state is permitted to request that the U.S. Department of State recommend up to 30 waivers for immigrant physicians who agree to work for three years in an underserved area. Each state also is permitted to recommend up to 10 "flex" slots for physicians who will work in an underserved area but not locate their practice there. Current Texas law limits use of the Conrad 30 program to an immigrant physician who agrees to practice medicine in a medically underserved area, which means that Texas is prevented from using the 10 "flex" spots.

S.B. 525 authorizes the Department of State Health Services to request waiver of foreign country residence requirements for a qualified alien physician who agrees to practice in accordance with the waiver requirements, giving priority to an area with a current shortage of physicians.

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

S.B. 525 authorizes the Department of State Health Services, in accordance with federal law, to request waiver of the foreign country residence requirement for a qualified alien physician who agrees to practice medicine in accordance with the federal waiver requirements, provided priority is given to an area with a current shortage of physicians, rather than for a qualified alien physician who agrees to practice medicine in a medically underserved area or health professional shortage area, as designated by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, that has a current shortage of physicians.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the act does not receive the necessary vote, the act takes effect September 1, 2009.