

By: Branch

H.B. No. 59

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1  
2 relating to the establishment of a law school in the city of Dallas  
3 by the University of North Texas System.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

5 SECTION 1. Subchapter J, Chapter 105, Education Code, is  
6 amended by adding Section 105.502 to read as follows:

7 Sec. 105.502. UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS SYSTEM SCHOOL OF  
8 LAW. (a) The board may establish and operate a school of law in  
9 the city of Dallas as a professional school of the University of  
10 North Texas System.

11 (b) In administering the law school, the board may prescribe  
12 courses leading to customary degrees offered at other leading  
13 American schools of law and may award those degrees.

14 (c) Until the University of North Texas at Dallas has been  
15 administered as a general academic teaching institution for five  
16 years, the board shall administer the law school as a professional  
17 school of the system. After that period, the law school shall  
18 become a professional school of the University of North Texas at  
19 Dallas. Until the law school becomes a professional school of the  
20 University of North Texas at Dallas, the law school is entitled to  
21 formula funding as if the law school were a professional school of a  
22 general academic teaching institution.

23 (d) Before the board establishes a law school under this  
24 section, but not later than June 1, 2010, the Texas Higher Education

1 Coordinating Board shall prepare a feasibility study to determine  
2 the actions the system must take to obtain accreditation of the law  
3 school. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall  
4 deliver a copy of the study to the chair of each legislative  
5 standing committee or subcommittee with jurisdiction over higher  
6 education.

7 SECTION 2. Subchapter B, Chapter 55, Education Code, is  
8 amended by adding Section 55.1775 to read as follows:

9 Sec. 55.1775. UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS SYSTEM; ADDITIONAL  
10 BONDS. (a) In addition to the other authority granted by this  
11 subchapter, the board of regents of the University of North Texas  
12 System may acquire, purchase, construct, improve, renovate,  
13 enlarge, or equip property, buildings, structures, or other  
14 facilities, including roads and related infrastructure, for the law  
15 school established in the city of Dallas by the University of North  
16 Texas System, to be financed by the issuance of bonds in accordance  
17 with this subchapter, including bonds issued in accordance with a  
18 systemwide revenue financing program and secured as provided by  
19 that program, in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$30  
20 million.

21 (b) The board of regents may pledge irrevocably to the  
22 payment of the bonds authorized by this section all or any part of  
23 the revenue funds of an institution, branch, or entity of the  
24 University of North Texas System, including student tuition  
25 charges. The amount of a pledge made under this subsection may not  
26 be reduced or abrogated while the bonds for which the pledge is  
27 made, or bonds issued to refund those bonds, are outstanding.

1       (c) If sufficient funds are not available to the board of  
2 regents to meet its obligations under this section, the board may  
3 transfer funds among institutions, branches, and entities of the  
4 University of North Texas System to ensure the most equitable and  
5 efficient allocation of available resources for each institution,  
6 branch, or entity to carry out its duties and purposes.

7       (d) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), the University of North  
8 Texas System may not issue bonds under this section for facilities  
9 at the law school established by the system until the date that the  
10 law school receives provisional or other appropriate accreditation  
11 by a recognized accrediting agency, as defined by Section 61.003.  
12 If the law school does not receive the provisional or other  
13 appropriate accreditation by January 1, 2012, the system's  
14 authority to issue bonds for the law school under this section  
15 expires on that date.

16       SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
17 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
18 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
19 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
20 Act takes effect September 1, 2009.