

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.S.B. 1736
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Economic & Small Business Development
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Countless Texas veterans receive top-level training in the military but have a hard time getting college credit for their knowledge and skills when they return to civilian life. Certain state agencies and community colleges are working on a plan to offer veterans credit for their skills and experience. C.S.S.B. 1736 seeks to formalize this initiative to develop a model for transfer methods that would maximize academic or workforce education credit awarded by institutions of higher education to veterans for military experience by establishing the College Credit for Heroes program.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Workforce Commission in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

C.S.S.B. 1736 amends the Labor Code to require the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to establish and administer the College Credit for Heroes demonstration program to identify, develop, and support methods to maximize academic or workforce education credit awarded by institutions of higher education to veterans and military servicemembers for military experience, education, and training obtained during military service in order to expedite the entry of veterans and military servicemembers into the workforce. The bill requires the TWC to work cooperatively with other state agencies, including the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, public junior colleges, and other institutions of higher education, to accomplish the purposes of the bill's provisions. The bill authorizes the TWC to award grants to state, local, or private entities that perform activities related to the purposes of the bill's provisions and requires the TWC to administer the program using money previously appropriated to the TWC or received from federal or other sources. The bill authorizes the TWC to adopt rules as necessary for the administration of the bill's provisions.

C.S.S.B. 1736 adds a temporary provision requiring the TWC, not later than November 1, 2012, and after consultation with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, to report to the legislature and the governor on the following: the results of any grants awarded under the bill's provisions; the best practices for veterans and military servicemembers to achieve maximum academic or workforce education credit at institutions of higher education for military experience, education, and training obtained during military service; measures needed to facilitate the award of academic or workforce education credit by institutions of higher education for military experience, education, and training obtained during military service; and other related measures needed to facilitate the entry of trained, qualified veterans and military servicemembers into the workforce. The bill sets this temporary provision to expire January 1, 2013.

C.S.S.B. 1736 provides for the meaning of "institution of higher education" by reference to the Education Code.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2011.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

C.S.S.B. 1736 differs from the original, in provisions requiring the Texas Workforce Commission to establish and administer the College Credit for Heroes demonstration program and to report to the legislature and the governor on certain related practices and measures, by relating to the goal of achieving maximum academic or workforce education credit at institutions of higher education for military experience, education, and training obtained during military service, whereas the original relates to the goal of achieving maximum academic credit for such experience, education, and training.