

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 834
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Economic & Small Business Development
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties note that the demand for skilled workers continues to grow as the Texas economy flourishes. These parties contend that most of the fastest growing job sectors will require some postsecondary education, many in the form of skills certification, and that the development of additional fast-track, affordable certification programs in high-demand industries will be beneficial to both employees and employers in Texas. C.S.H.B. 834 establishes the Texas Fast Start Program, which seeks to promote rapid delivery of workforce education and development.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 834 amends the Labor Code to require the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), in partnership with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, to establish and administer the Texas Fast Start Program to identify and develop methods to support, and to provide support for, competency-based, rapid-deployment education delivery models for use by public junior colleges, public state colleges, and public technical institutes. The bill requires the models to be designed to assist students in maximizing academic or workforce education program credit from public junior colleges, public state colleges, and public technical institutes to expedite the entry of those students into the workforce. The bill requires TWC to work collaboratively with the coordinating board, public junior colleges, public state colleges, and public technical institutes to accomplish the program's purposes. The bill authorizes those colleges and institutes to use the competency-based, rapid-deployment education delivery models in developing or expanding a fast start program at the college or institute.

C.S.H.B. 834 requires a fast start program offered by a public junior college, public state college, or public technical institute to be designed for rapid deployment statewide and to do the following: focus on the current and future needs of employers in Texas; enable students to obtain postsecondary certificates and degrees at an accelerated pace in high-demand fields or occupations, as identified by local employers; incorporate competency-based learning techniques; and feature a variety of access channels that are uniquely designed to maximize job preparedness for identified groups such as veterans, high school graduates, and current workforce members seeking retraining.

C.S.H.B. 834 authorizes TWC, through the collaboration with the coordinating board, public junior colleges, public state colleges, and public technical institutes, to award grants to those colleges and institutes for the expansion of existing fast start programs, the development of new fast start programs, and any other activities related to the purposes of the program. The bill limits the use of such a grant to the following: supporting a course or program that prepares students

for career employment in fields or occupations that are identified as high-demand by local employers; financing the initial costs of developing a fast start program, including the costs of constructing or renovating facilities, purchasing equipment, and other associated expenses; financing the development or expansion of a fast start program leading to a postsecondary certificate or degree; or offering a new or expanded dual credit fast start program jointly with a public high school.

C.S.H.B. 834 requires TWC and the coordinating board to administer the program using money appropriated to TWC or the coordinating board, money received from federal or other sources, or money from holding accounts that may be used by TWC for the purpose of skills development. The bill authorizes TWC and the coordinating board to adopt rules as necessary for the administration of the bill's provisions.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2013.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 834 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following comparison is organized and highlighted in a manner that indicates the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

INTRODUCED

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 302, Labor Code, is amended by adding Section 302.0032 to read as follows:

Sec. 302.0032. TEXAS FAST START PROGRAM. (a) In this section:

(1) "Fast start program" means a career and technical educational program designed to help students earn career certifications and enter into the workforce quickly.

(2) "Public junior college" and "public technical institute" have the meanings assigned by Section 61.003, Education Code.

(b) The commission shall establish and administer the Texas Fast Start Program to identify, develop, and support methods to maximize academic or workforce education credit from public junior colleges and public technical institutes to expedite the entry of postsecondary students into the workforce.

HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 302, Labor Code, is amended by adding Section 302.0032 to read as follows:

Sec. 302.0032. TEXAS FAST START PROGRAM. (a) In this section:

(1) "Fast start program" means a career and technical education program designed to help students earn postsecondary certificates and degrees and enter into the workforce quickly.

(2) "Public junior college," "public state college," and "public technical institute" have the meanings assigned by Section 61.003, Education Code.

(b) The commission, in partnership with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, shall establish and administer the Texas Fast Start Program to identify and develop methods to support, and shall provide support for, competency-based, rapid-deployment education delivery models for use by public junior colleges, public state colleges, and public technical institutes. The models must be designed to assist students in maximizing academic or workforce education program credit from public junior colleges, public state colleges, and public technical institutes to expedite the entry of those students into the workforce.

(c) The commission shall work collaboratively with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, public junior colleges, and public technical institutes to accomplish the purposes of this section.

(d) Through the collaboration, the commission shall develop new competency-based, rapid-deployment education delivery models for use by a public junior college or public technical institute in developing or expanding a fast start program as described by this section.

(e) A fast start program under this section must:

(1) focus on the current and future needs of employers in this state;

(2) enable students to obtain certifications at an accelerated pace in high-demand fields or occupations, as identified by local employers;

(3) incorporate competency-based learning techniques;

(4) feature a variety of access channels that are uniquely designed to maximize job preparedness for identified groups such as veterans, high school graduates, and current workforce members seeking retraining; and

(5) be designed for rapid deployment statewide.

(f) Through the collaboration, the commission: (1) may award grants to public junior colleges and public technical institutes for:

(A) the expansion of existing fast start programs;

(B) the development of new fast start programs; and

(C) any other activities related to the purposes of this section; and
(2) shall create a variety of incentives that encourage public junior colleges and public technical institutes to expand any existing fast start programs.

(g) A grant received under this section may be used only to:

(1) support a course or program that prepares students for career employment in fields or occupations that are identified as high-demand by local employers;

(2) finance the initial costs of developing a fast start program, including the costs of constructing or renovating facilities, purchasing equipment, and other associated

(c) The commission shall work collaboratively with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, public junior colleges, public state colleges, and public technical institutes to accomplish the purposes of this section.

(d) A public junior college, public state college, or public technical institute may use the competency-based, rapid-deployment education delivery models described by Subsection (b) in developing or expanding a fast start program at the college or institute.

(e) A fast start program offered by a public junior college, public state college, or public technical institute must:

(1) focus on the current and future needs of employers in this state;

(2) enable students to obtain postsecondary certificates and degrees at an accelerated pace in high-demand fields or occupations, as identified by local employers;

(3) incorporate competency-based learning techniques;

(4) feature a variety of access channels that are uniquely designed to maximize job preparedness for identified groups such as veterans, high school graduates, and current workforce members seeking retraining; and

(5) be designed for rapid deployment statewide.

(f) Through the collaboration, the commission may award grants to public junior colleges, public state colleges, and public technical institutes for:

(1) the expansion of existing fast start programs;

(2) the development of new fast start programs; and

(3) any other activities related to the purposes of this section.

(g) A grant received under this section may be used only to:

(1) support a course or program that prepares students for career employment in fields or occupations that are identified as high-demand by local employers;

(2) finance the initial costs of developing a fast start program, including the costs of constructing or renovating facilities, purchasing equipment, and other associated

expenses;

(3) finance the development or expansion of a fast start program leading to a license, certificate, or postsecondary degree; and

(4) offer a new or expanded dual credit fast start program jointly with a public high school.

(h) The commission shall administer the program using money appropriated to the commission, money received from federal or other sources, or money from holding accounts that may be used by the commission for the purpose of skills development.

(i) The commission may adopt rules as necessary for the administration of this section.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2013.

expenses;

(3) finance the development or expansion of a fast start program leading to a postsecondary certificate or degree; or

(4) offer a new or expanded dual credit fast start program jointly with a public high school.

(h) The commission and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall administer the program using money appropriated to the commission or board, money received from federal or other sources, or money from holding accounts that may be used by the commission for the purpose of skills development.

(i) The commission and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board may adopt rules as necessary for the administration of this section.

SECTION 2. Same as introduced version.