

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1004
By: Gonzales, Larry
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties observe that, as the number of active duty military personnel starts to decline, many Texas-based veterans are deciding to utilize state benefits for higher education, which has led to an increase in the veteran benefit caseload for each state university. For some universities, this workload has far outpaced the capacity of their staff. H.B. 1004 seeks to remedy this problem by providing for a new online-based tracking and certification system to streamline the benefits process for veterans at public institutions 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. 1004 amends the Education Code to require an institution of higher education to adopt and maintain an electronic auditing system to verify the enrollment and completion of courses that count toward the degree plan of military veterans or family members of veterans receiving student financial assistance. The bill requires the electronic auditing system to allow a student to track the student's progress towards completing the student's degree plan through the institution's Internet website. The bill requires each institution of higher education to ensure that one or more institution employees receives training in tracking, through the electronic auditing system, the academic progress of military veterans or family members of veterans receiving student financial assistance, in verifying the information provided by the system, and in providing guidance in understanding and using the information, in addition to other required training. The bill requires each public institution of higher education to implement the electronic auditing system beginning with the 2014 fall semester.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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