

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 414
By: Ellis et al.
Higher Education
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Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Texas is facing a shortage of nurses. The Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies estimates the state's nursing programs need to increase the number of graduates to 25,000 by 2020 to meet the expected demand for nurses. This takes into account the impending retirement of the "baby boom" generation registered nurses. The need for additional nurses is especially important in the Houston region, home to the largest medical complex in the country. Other nursing school programs within the Texas Medical Center and the State of Texas are functioning at capacity.

Texas allows junior and community colleges to offer associate's degrees and a limited number of bachelor's degrees. Junior and community colleges can offer bachelor's degrees if they previously participated in a pilot program to offer bachelor's degrees.

S.B. 414 will allow some junior and community colleges to offer a Bachelor of Nursing degree to help meet the needs of the state. The change is restricted to those junior and community colleges that offer a degree program in nursing. The bill is bracketed to Harris County.

The projected cost of a Houston Community College Bachelor of Nursing degree is \$9,000, making it a cost-effective degree. The partnerships that Houston Community College has developed with the current nursing schools in the Houston area will not be adversely affected by this change because other nursing schools are operating at capacity with their Bachelor of Nursing programs.

S.B. 414 amends current law relating to a study and report regarding authorizing certain public junior colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs to address regional workforce needs.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 130, Education Code, by adding Section 130.0013, as follows:

Sec. 130.0013. STUDY AND REPORT; BACCALAUREATE DEGREE PROGRAMS AUTHORITY. (a) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to, using existing funds, conduct a study or regional workforce needs in this state to determine the regions of the state that would benefit from the authorization of baccalaureate degree programs in the field of nursing and in the field of applied sciences at public junior colleges serving the region and appropriate metrics for determining whether a public junior college should offer those degree programs. Requires THECB, in conducting its study, to consult with at least one representative of each of the following:

- (1) four-year institutions of higher education;
- (2) two-year institutions of higher education;

(3) regional businesses;

(4) professional associations; and

(5) any other entity the commissioner of higher education considers appropriate.

(b) Requires THECB, not later than August 1, 2014, to submit to each legislative standing committee with primary jurisdiction over higher education the results of its study under this section and recommendation for legislative or other action.

(c) Provides that this section expires September 1, 2015.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2013.