

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1741
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Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Higher education experts who appeared before the interim hearings of the Joint Oversight Committee on Higher Education Governance, Excellence, and Transparency reported that university system regents could benefit from greater training and information. Recent concerns regarding regent governance suggests that the training required of regents must be improved.

This bill addresses calls for improved regent governance by expanding their training opportunities.

As proposed, S.B. 1741 amends current law relating to training requirements applicable to members of the governing board of a public institution of higher education.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Section 61.084, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 61.084, Education Code, by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (a-1) and Subsection (h), as follows:

(a) Requires that each member of a governing board of an institution of higher education attend, during the member's first year, rather than a member's first two years, of service as a member of a governing board of an institution of higher education, at least one training program under this section.

(a-1) Requires that the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's (THECB) rules require a governing board member as part of the training program to attend any available training course sponsored or coordinated by the office of the governor with a curriculum designed for training newly appointed state officers, THECB members, or high-level executive officials. Requires that the rules require the member to attend the course the first time the course is offered following the date the member takes the oath of office, regardless of whether that attendance is required under other law. Authorizes the rules to provide a governing board member additional time to attend the course if the member for good cause is unable to attend the course the first time the course is offered. Provides that Subsection (g) (relating to requiring THECB to provide an equivalent training program by electronic means if a member is unable to attend a training program) does not apply to the course required by this subsection.

(h) Provides that THECB is responsible for documenting completion of the requirements in this section.

SECTION 2. Adds Section 61.0844, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 61.0841. INTENSE SHORT COURSE. (a) Requires that THECB develop an intense short orientation course that a governing board member is required to complete

before they vote at a meeting of the governing board. Provides that the course can be a written document, an online interactive course, or taken in a one-to-one or group setting.

(b) Requires that the content of the instruction provided by the course include best practices relating to excellence, transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the governing structure and organization of state university and state university systems; best practices relating to the manner in which governing boards and administrators of state universities and state university systems develop and implement major policy decisions, including impartiality and adequacy of their processes; matters relating to excellence, transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the governance and administration of the state's universities and university systems; and ethics, conflicts of interests, and the proper role of a THECB member in the governance structure of state universities and university systems.

(c) Provides that THECB is responsible for documenting completion of the requirements of this section.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2013.