

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1611
By: Guillen
Higher Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties suggest that, because certain college preparatory courses address college readiness up front, students who successfully complete them should be exempt from assessment requirements under the Texas Success Initiative, which has a corresponding goal of assessing incoming undergraduate students' readiness to enroll in freshman-level coursework, for a longer period of time. C.S.H.B. 1611 seeks to eliminate duplicative and potentially costly developmental education course requirements for students and allow successful students to proceed to college.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

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

C.S.H.B. 1611 amends the Education Code to establish that the exemption for each high school student who successfully completes certain college preparatory courses from the assessment requirements of the Texas Success Initiative with respect to the content area of each such course is effective for the two-year period following the date the student graduates from high school. The bill removes the requirement that the commissioner of higher education by rule establish the period for which the exemption is valid. The bill conditions the exemption on a student enrolling in a college-level course in the exempted content area during the student's first year of enrollment at an institution of higher education occurring after the student qualifies for the exemption. The bill requires the institution, if the student earns a grade below a "C" for the course, to advise the student of non-course-based options for attaining college readiness, such as tutoring or accelerated learning.

C.S.H.B. 1611 requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to collect and analyze data regarding the effectiveness of college preparatory courses in assisting students to become ready to perform college-level academic coursework, as measured by the rate at which students receiving the success initiative exemption successfully complete the college-level course required by the bill, and, in November of each even-numbered year, to submit a report on the coordinating board's findings to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, the standing legislative committees with primary jurisdiction over higher education, and each institution of higher education and school district that offers a college preparatory course. The bill's provisions apply beginning with the assessment of entering undergraduate students at public institutions of higher education for the 2015 fall semester.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2015.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 1611 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following comparison is organized and formatted in a manner that indicates the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

INTRODUCED

SECTION 1. Section 51.3062(q-2), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(q-2) A student who successfully completes a college preparatory course under Section 28.014 is exempt from the requirements of this section with respect to the content area of the course.

The exemption is effective for the three-year period following the date the student graduates from high school. ~~[The commissioner of higher education by rule shall establish the period for which an exemption under this subsection is valid.]~~ The exemption applies only at the institution of higher education that partners with the school district in which the student is enrolled to provide the course, except that the commissioner by rule may determine the manner in which the exemption may be applied to institutions of higher education other than the partnering institution.

No equivalent provision.

No equivalent provision.

HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

SECTION 1. Section 51.3062, Education Code, is amended by amending Subsection (q-2) and adding Subsections (q-3) and (q-4) to read as follows:

(q-2) A student who successfully completes a college preparatory course under Section 28.014 is exempt from the requirements of this section with respect to the content area of the course, provided that the student satisfies the requirements under Subsection (q-3). ~~The exemption is effective for the two-year period following the date the student graduates from high school.~~ ~~[The commissioner of higher education by rule shall establish the period for which an exemption under this subsection is valid.]~~ The exemption applies only at the institution of higher education that partners with the school district in which the student is enrolled to provide the course, except that the commissioner by rule may determine the manner in which the exemption may be applied to institutions of higher education other than the partnering institution.

(q-3) A student receiving an exemption under Subsection (q-2) must enroll in a college-level course in the exempted content area during the student's first year of enrollment at an institution of higher education occurring after the student qualifies for the exemption. If the student earns a grade below a "C" for the course, the institution shall advise the student of non-course-based options for attaining college readiness, such as tutoring or accelerated learning.

(q-4) The board shall:
(1) collect and analyze data regarding the effectiveness of college preparatory courses provided under Section 28.014 in assisting

students to become ready to perform college-level academic coursework, as measured by the rate at which students receiving an exemption under Subsection (q-2) successfully complete the course described by Subsection (q-3); and (2) in November of each even-numbered year, submit a report on the board's findings to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, the standing legislative committees with primary jurisdiction over higher education, and each institution of higher education and school district that offers a college preparatory course under Section 28.014.

SECTION 2. The change in law made by this Act applies beginning with the assessment of entering undergraduate students at public institutions of higher education for the 2015 fall semester. The assessment of an entering undergraduate student for an academic term before that semester is covered by the law in effect before the effective date of this Act, and that law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 3. 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, 2015.

SECTION 2. Same as introduced version.

SECTION 3. Same as introduced version.