

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1992
By: Zerwas
Higher Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Advanced Placement (AP) program is a widely implemented program that allows high school students to take college-level courses and earn college credit before graduating high school. Scores on AP examinations are ranked one through five and correspond with letter grades for certain college courses. According to interested parties, studies conducted in states that have adopted statewide AP credit-by-examination policies have shown strong college performance by students who earn a score of three or higher on an AP examination. Granting undergraduate course credit for scores of three on an AP examination, these parties contend, could potentially save Texas families millions in tuition costs, given the number of students who achieve that score on AP examinations and the number of course credits that score represents. The parties conclude that an ambitious student could enter college with a full semester of college credit if the student completes the core curriculum classes through an AP examination route. C.S.H.B. 1992 seeks to provide for such opportunities, with a certain exception.

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 rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 2 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1992 amends the Education Code to prohibit an institution of higher education from requiring a score of more than three in establishing the minimum required score on an Advanced Placement (AP) examination for granting undergraduate course credit to entering freshman students for a particular lower-division course, beginning with freshman students entering institutions of higher education in the 2016 fall semester, unless the institution's chief academic officer determines, based on evidence, that a higher score on the examination is necessary to indicate a student is sufficiently prepared to be successful in a related, more advanced course for which the lower-division course is a prerequisite.

C.S.H.B. 1992 requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in consultation with institutions of higher education, the coordinating board's Undergraduate Education Advisory Committee, and other interested parties, to conduct a study on the performance of undergraduate students at institutions of higher education who receive undergraduate course credit for achieving required scores on one or more AP examinations. The bill requires the study to compare the academic performance, retention rates, and graduation rates at institutions of higher education of students who complete a lower-division course at an institution and students who receive credit for that course for a score of three or more on an AP examination, disaggregated

by score. The bill requires each institution to submit to the coordinating board any data requested by the coordinating board as necessary for it to carry out its duties relating to the study. The bill requires the coordinating board, not later than January 1, 2017, to submit to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the standing legislative committees with primary jurisdiction over higher education a report regarding the results of the study and any recommendations for legislative or administrative action. The bill requires the coordinating board to adopt rules as necessary to implement the study in a manner that ensures compliance with federal law regarding confidentiality of student educational information. The bill's provisions relating to the study expire September 1, 2017.

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. 1992 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 51.968, Education Code, is amended by adding Subsection (c-1) to read as follows:

(c-1) In establishing the minimum required score on an Advanced Placement examination for granting course credit under Subsection (c), an institution of higher education may not require a score of more than three.

No equivalent provision.

HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

SECTION 1. Section 51.968, Education Code, is amended by adding Subsection (c-1) to read as follows:

(c-1) In establishing the minimum required score on an Advanced Placement examination for granting course credit for a particular lower-division course under Subsection (c), an institution of higher education may not require a score of more than three unless the institution's chief academic officer determines, based on evidence, that a higher score on the examination is necessary to indicate a student is sufficiently prepared to be successful in a related, more advanced course for which the lower-division course is a prerequisite.

SECTION 2. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 61.0518 to read as follows:

Sec. 61.0518. STUDY ON UNDERGRADUATE COURSE CREDIT FOR ADVANCED PLACEMENT EXAMINATIONS. (a) In this section, "Advanced Placement examination" has the meaning assigned by Section 51.968.

(b) The board, in consultation with institutions of higher education, the board's Undergraduate Education Advisory Committee, and other interested parties, shall conduct a study on the performance of undergraduate students at institutions of higher education who receive undergraduate course credit for achieving required scores on one or more Advanced

Placement examinations.

(c) The study must compare the academic performance, retention rates, and graduation rates at institutions of higher education of students who complete a lower-division course at an institution and students who receive credit for that course for a score of three or more on an Advanced Placement examination, disaggregated by score.

(d) Each institution of higher education shall submit to the board any data requested by the board as necessary for the board to carry out its duties under this section.

(e) Not later than January 1, 2017, the board shall submit to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the standing legislative committees with primary jurisdiction over higher education a report regarding the results of the study and any recommendations for legislative or administrative action.

(f) The board shall adopt rules as necessary to implement this section in a manner that ensures compliance with federal law regarding confidentiality of student educational information, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C. Section 1232g).

(g) This section expires September 1, 2017.

SECTION 2. Section 51.968(c-1), Education Code, as added by this Act, applies to entering freshman students at institutions of higher education beginning with the 2016 fall semester.

SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.

SECTION 3. Same as introduced version.

SECTION 4. 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.