

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 3337
By: Clardy
General Investigating & Ethics
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties have observed the practice in state government of allowing staff-level state employees to authorize advance payments for graduate degree program costs for certain high-level employees without appropriate executive-level oversight. H.B. 3337 seeks to address this concern.

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 a department, agency, or institution of the executive, legislative, or judicial branch of state government, including an institution of higher education, in SECTION 3 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 3337 amends the Government Code to clarify that for purposes of statutory provisions relating to the training of state officers and employees and restrictions on such training, "state agency" means a department, agency, or institution of the executive, legislative, or judicial branch of state government, including an institution of higher education. The bill restricts a state agency, with regard to an administrator or employee of the state agency who seeks reimbursement for a training or education program offered by an institution of higher education or private or independent institution of higher education, to only paying the tuition expenses for a program course successfully completed by the administrator or employee at an accredited institution of higher education. The bill requires a state agency to adopt rules requiring that before an agency administrator or employee may be reimbursed for such tuition expenses, the executive head of the agency must authorize the tuition reimbursement payment.

H.B. 3337 requires the policy adopted by a state agency governing the training of employees to provide clear and objective guidelines to govern tuition reimbursement for an administrator or employee of a state agency who is enrolled in training for which the administrator or employee seeks reimbursement from the state and to address tuition reimbursement for nontraditional training, including online courses or courses not credited towards a degree. The bill requires the state agency to post the adopted policy on the employment section of the agency's website.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2015.