

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 3348
By: Clardy
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties have observed the need for health care professionals across Texas, especially in the area of dental hygiene. The parties cite state health authorities in identifying access to oral health care as a critical issue, with the greatest unmet need found in East Texas. The parties note that certain public junior colleges, such as Tyler Junior College, already have a facility for a dental hygiene program, support from surrounding community colleges, and related experience. H.B. 3348 seeks to address the need for dental hygiene professionals by providing for the authorization of a baccalaureate degree in the field of dental hygiene to be offered at certain public junior colleges, such as Tyler Junior 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 rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 3348 amends the Education Code to remove the requirement that the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board authorize public junior colleges to offer baccalaureate degree programs in the fields of applied science and applied technology and to instead authorize the coordinating board to grant such an authorization for baccalaureate degree programs in the same fields, plus the field of dental hygiene. The bill requires the coordinating board to authorize baccalaureate degree programs at one or more public junior colleges that offer a degree program in the field of dental hygiene if, at the time the degree is initially offered, the public junior college has a main campus located in the county seat of a county with a population greater than 200,000 and includes territory in at least six public school districts located in two counties. The bill requires the coordinating board to adopt rules as necessary for the administration of baccalaureate degree programs at public junior colleges.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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