

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 3467
By: Martinez, "Mando"
Higher Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties suggest that, as technology continues to grow, Texas has a unique opportunity to provide educational benefits through videoconferencing, particularly at a location like the new medical school at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, which will offer classes in different counties across the region. The potential for video-conferenced classes is ripe, the parties continue, but the technology is new enough that there is no data to support the feasibility of distance learning classes in such a setting. C.S.H.B. 3467 seeks to provide for this data through a study to be conducted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

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. 3467 amends the Education Code to require the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to conduct a feasibility study that explores postsecondary distance learning opportunities through an interactive video classroom and to conduct the study with respect to at least the Rio Grande Valley region of Texas. The bill requires the study to explore the possibility of using an interactive video classroom to expand medical education opportunities and increase access to undergraduate and graduate courses of all types and to identify possible impediments to postsecondary distance learning opportunities. The bill requires the coordinating board, not later than November 1, 2016, to complete the feasibility study and post the study results on the coordinating board's website. The bill's provisions 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. 3467 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

HOUSE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

SECTION 1. Subchapter Z, Chapter 51,

SECTION 1. Subchapter Z, Chapter 51,

84R 28071

15.126.94

Substitute Document Number: 84R 26313

Education Code, is amended by adding Section 51.981 to read as follows:

Sec. 51.981. POSTSECONDARY DISTANCE LEARNING FEASIBILITY STUDY. (a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall conduct a feasibility study that explores postsecondary distance learning opportunities in accordance with this section.

(b) The coordinating board must conduct the feasibility study with respect to at least the Rio Grande Valley region of this state. The study must:

(1) explore the possibility of:

(A) using technology to connect medical schools with other medical entities in this state;

(B) allowing secondary and postsecondary students to experience distance learning opportunities through attendance of appropriate postsecondary courses through live, full-motion videoconferencing; and

(C) offering virtual, interactive undergraduate or graduate degree programs to secondary or postsecondary students, as appropriate; and

(2) identify possible impediments to postsecondary distance learning opportunities, including program accreditation requirements and the availability of funds for that purpose.

(c) The coordinating board shall post the results of the feasibility study on its website.

SECTION 2. Not later than September 1, 2016, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall develop and begin conducting the feasibility study required under Section 51.981, Education Code, as added by this Act.

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.

84R 28071

Substitute Document Number: 84R 26313

Education Code, is amended by adding Section 51.981 to read as follows:

Sec. 51.981. POSTSECONDARY DISTANCE LEARNING FEASIBILITY STUDY. (a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall conduct a feasibility study that explores postsecondary distance learning opportunities through an interactive video classroom in accordance with this section.

(b) The coordinating board must conduct the feasibility study with respect to at least the Rio Grande Valley region of this state. The study must:

(1) explore the possibility of using an interactive video classroom to:

(A) expand medical education opportunities; and

(B) increase access to undergraduate and graduate courses of all types; and

(2) identify possible impediments to postsecondary distance learning opportunities, including program accreditation requirements and the availability of funds for that purpose.

(c) Not later than November 1, 2016, the coordinating board shall complete the feasibility study and post the results of the feasibility study on its website.

(d) This section expires September 1, 2017.

No equivalent provision.

SECTION 2. Same as introduced version.

15.126.94