

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 44
By: Zaffirini
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Interested parties note that current law does not address whether private gifts made to institutions of higher education to support undergraduate research are eligible for matching funds under the Texas Research Incentive Program and that the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has interpreted that to mean that those gifts are not eligible for matching funds. The parties contend that this interpretation is contrary to the original intent of the law and unduly restricts access to these funds by programs that could benefit from the funds. S.B. 44 seeks to bring clarity to the law in this regard and help to incentivize research in a manner consistent with the original intent of that law.

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

S.B. 44 amends the Education Code to include undergraduate research among the purposes for which an institution of higher education designated as an emerging research university under the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's accountability system receives gifts or endowments from private sources in a state fiscal year that trigger the institution's entitlement to receive, out of funds appropriated for the purposes of the Texas Research Incentive Program (TRIP) for that fiscal year, a matching grant in a specified amount. The bill specifies that the gifts for grants to which such an institution is not entitled to matching funds under TRIP are gifts for undergraduate financial aid grants.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2015.