

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 686
By: Seliger
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Recent legislation created the mathematics and science teacher investment fund and the Math and Science Scholars Loan Repayment Program to assist Texas teachers in repaying higher education loan debt if they teach math or science in certain school districts. Currently, interested parties note, the fund consists of gifts, grants, and other donations and interest and earnings from the investment of the fund, and interest has been expressed in expanding fund sources to include legislative appropriations. S.B. 686 seeks to address matters relating to the fund and program.

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. 686 amends the Education Code to change the basis on which the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board provides assistance in the repayment of eligible student loans for eligible persons who agree to teach mathematics or science for a specified period from the persons teaching those subjects in school districts that receive certain federal funding under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to the persons teaching those subjects in schools that receive such funding. The bill replaces as a condition of eligibility for such loan repayment assistance the person being enrolled in an educator preparation program to obtain certification to teach mathematics or science in a Texas public school that is accredited by the State Board for Educator Certification and is provided by a public, private, or independent institution of higher education in Texas with the person teaching under a probationary teaching certificate.

S.B. 686 includes as a component of the mathematics and science teacher investment fund any amounts appropriated by the legislature for the fund. The bill clarifies that an eligible person may continue to receive loan repayment assistance if the person continues to teach in a public school that receives certain funding under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 after the first four years of required teaching service.

S.B. 686 repeals Section 61.9837(f), Education Code, which prohibits the legislature from appropriating general revenue to the mathematics and science teacher investment fund.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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