

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 539
By: Leman
Higher Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been noted that certain students, including valedictorians, who graduate high school in a class of fewer than ten students may not benefit from state law entitling students who graduate in the top 10 percent of a graduating class to automatic admission to state-funded universities. C.S.H.B. 539 seeks to remedy this situation by guaranteeing automatic admission for high school valedictorians, regardless of graduating class size.

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. 539 amends the Education Code to require each general academic teaching institution to admit an applicant for admission to the institution as an undergraduate student if the applicant graduated as the valedictorian of the student's high school graduating class in one of the two school years preceding the academic year for which the student is applying for admission and satisfies certain other criteria for automatic admission. The bill establishes that a valedictorian applicant admitted under this requirement is considered automatically admitted for purposes of statutory automatic admission procedures. The bill makes a student who graduated from a public or accredited private high school in Texas as the valedictorian of the student's graduating class and who meets other applicable criteria eligible for the scholarship program for students graduating in the top 10 percent of their high school class. The bill's provisions apply beginning with admissions to a general academic teaching institution and with scholarships awarded, as applicable, for the 2019-2020 academic year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2019.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 539 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute includes a provision establishing that a valedictorian applicant admitted under the

bill's provisions is considered automatically admitted for purposes of statutory automatic admission procedures.