

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 3351
By: Pacheco
Higher Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

There have been calls to consider updating the funding of public junior colleges in Texas, as the current funding formula has not been updated in almost 50 years. C.S.H.B. 3351 seeks to address these calls by creating the Texas Commission on Community College Finance to study and make recommendations for the funding of public junior colleges to the 88th Legislature.

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. 3351 amends the Education Code to establish the 12-member Texas Commission on Community College Finance to make recommendations for consideration by the 88th Legislature regarding the state funding formula and funding levels for public junior colleges that would be sufficient to sustain viable junior college education and training offerings throughout the state and improve student outcomes in alignment with state postsecondary goals.

C.S.H.B. 3351 sets out the composition of the commission and the appointment of members, including appointment by the Texas Association of Community Colleges and the Community College Association of Texas Trustees, and sets out requirements for the members appointed by the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives. The bill provides for the geographic and ethnic diversity reflected in commission membership and requires the commission to convene not later than October 15, 2021.

C.S.H.B. 3351 requires the commission to examine trend and forecast data, seek stakeholder input, account for equity in student outcomes and, based on its findings, make recommendations on the components of state funding for public junior colleges and the feasibility of establishing shared service agreements or interinstitutional collaborations for the performance of certain administrative services.

C.S.H.B. 3351 authorizes the commission to seek resource support from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Texas Association of Community Colleges, and research organizations and accept gifts, grants, and donations from any source to be used to carry out a commission function. The bill requires the commission to submit a final report and recommendations to specified recipients not later than November 1, 2022, and to cease its activities on completion of the final report.

The provisions of C.S.H.B. 3351 expire January 1, 2023.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 3351 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 increases the number of members of the commission from 11, as in the original, to 12 by increasing from three to four the number of members appointed by the governor and requires one of those members to be a public junior college faculty member, which is not required in the original.

The substitute does not include the original's provisions that require certain commission examinations to be done with a particular focus on students who are underrepresented in higher education, including from families in the bottom quintiles of the economic spectrum.

The substitute expands the original's provision relating to the purposes of the commission to include the improvement of student outcomes in alignment with state postsecondary goals.

The substitute expands the commission recommendation, as prescribed by the original, relating to contact hour funding formulas by requiring recommendations on all components of state funding for public junior colleges, including those contact hour funding formulas, rather than only on the formulas. The substitute removes provisions that appeared in the original requiring the commission to make recommendations on the following specific policies:

- the use of student success points to determine the allocation of state funding to public junior colleges;
- historical or innovative funding methods for supporting underfunded colleges; and
- revenue source proportionality in the payment of employee group insurance benefits.

The substitute makes the following changes to provisions contained in the original:

- the original's effective date changes from on passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote for immediate effect, September 1, 2021, to September 1, 2021; and
- the original's deadline for the commission to convene changes from not later than the 90th day after the bill's enactment, as required in the original, to not later than October 15, 2021.