

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
87R18747 KJE-D

C.S.S.B. 810  
By: Kolkhorst  
Higher Education  
4/21/2021  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

H.B. 2504, passed in 2009, required each institution of higher education to make course syllabi information accessible to the public through each institution's website. The bill required each institution to have the syllabi information accessible within three links of the institution's website home page and searchable by keywords. Requiring higher education institutions to post course information online ensures the continuous availability of vital course information. It also provides current and potential students convenient access to course syllabi so they may evaluate courses prior to enrollment. A recent review of several higher education institution websites indicate that many institutions are not in compliance with ensuring that course syllabi information is accessible.

In an effort to improve and enhance higher education institutions' compliance with the requirements of H.B. 2504, S.B. 810 requires each university's compliance report to be provided to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and posted on THECB's website. The bill also expands syllabi public access requirements to graduate courses and improves the accessibility of this information by enabling the course syllabi information to be easily searchable and accessible on the institution's website home page.

Lastly, the bill grants authority for the Comptroller of Public Accounts of the State of Texas to withhold funds of higher education institutions that are out of compliance with the provisions of S.B. 810.

The committee substitute makes the following changes:

On page 1, line 11 adds back in "classroom" to clarify the type of courses;

On page 2, line 26, adds "substantial" to clarify that institutions must be in substantial compliance with the requirement of the bill;

On page 3, lines 8 and 9, gives the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board authority to adopt rules to determine if institutions are in substantial compliance;

On page 3, strikes the entire section that provides for a financial penalty.

C.S.S.B. 810 amends current law relating to the course information required to be posted on a public institution of higher education's Internet website.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

Rulemaking authority previously granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is modified in SECTION 1 (Section 51.974, Education Code) of this bill.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Section 51.974, Education Code, by amending Subsections (a), (b), (f), and (g) and adding Subsection (f-1), as follows:

(a) Requires each institution of higher education, other than a medical and dental unit, as defined by Section 61.003 (Definitions), to make available to the public on the institution's Internet website certain information for each classroom course, rather than for each undergraduate classroom course, offered for credit by the institution.

(b) Requires that the information required by Subsection (a) meet certain criteria, including that it be accessible from the institution's Internet website homepage, rather than accessible by use of not more than three links, and clearly labeled as "public course and syllabus information." Makes nonsubstantive changes.

(f) Includes the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) among the entities to whom each institution of higher education, not later than January 1 of each odd-numbered year, is required to submit a written report regarding the institution's compliance with Section 51.974 (Internet Access to Course Information). Makes a nonsubstantive change.

(f-1) Requires THECB to monitor each institution of higher education to determine whether the institution is in substantial compliance with this section and make available to the public on THECB's Internet website:

(1) a list indicating whether each institution of higher education is in substantial compliance with this section; and

(2) a copy of each report submitted to THECB under Subsection (f).

(g) Authorizes THECB to adopt rules necessary to administer this section, including rules to ensure substantial compliance with this section.

SECTION 2. Provides that Section 51.974, Education Code, as amended by this Act, applies beginning with the 2022 spring semester.

SECTION 3. Provides that THECB is required to implement Section 51.974(f-1), Education Code, as added by this Act, only if the legislature appropriates money specifically for that purpose. Authorizes, but does not require, THECB, if the legislature does not appropriate money specifically for that purpose, to implement that subsection using other appropriations available for that purpose.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2021.