

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
87R9500 CXP-D

S.B. 1889
By: Creighton
Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The teaching of knowledgeable, responsible American citizenship has never been more important or necessary. If American democracy is to thrive, our nation needs a citizenry with a common civic knowledge base as well as the civic skills and dispositions essential to informed, respectful debate. Yet knowledge about our government and our common history has eroded, even among college students. Current law prohibits a college or university receiving state funding from granting a bachelor's degree or a lesser degree or academic certificate to a student unless the student earns six semester credit hours or its equivalent in American history, with partial satisfaction of these hours allowed for Texas history courses.

Concerns have been raised about the narrow scope of some of the history classes that currently count towards this requirement providing a less-than-comprehensive picture of history. S.B. 1889 seeks to reinforce the original intent of the American history requirement by specifying that only survey courses in American or Texas history can satisfy the six semester credit hour requirement. This proposal amends the Education Code to specify that the American history credit a student must have before that student may be granted a bachelor's degree or a lesser degree or academic certificate from a college or university receiving state support or state aid from public funds be from a survey course providing a critical and analytical review of American history.

As proposed, S.B. 1889 amends current law relating to curriculum requirements in American and Texas history at institutions of higher education.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 51.302(b), Education Code, as follows:

(b) Prohibits a college or university receiving state support or state aid from public funds, except as provided by Subsection (c) (relating to the authority of certain institutions to exempt certain students from the American History course requirements), from granting a baccalaureate degree or a lesser degree or academic certificate to any person unless the person has credit for six semester hours or its equivalent from survey courses in American History, rather than its equivalent in American History. Makes conforming changes.

SECTION 2. Provides that the changes in law made by this Act apply only to the curriculum requirements established for a degree or certificate program offered by an institution of higher education beginning with undergraduate students who initially enroll in the institution for the 2022 fall semester.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2021.