

By: Martinez

H.B. No. 695

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1  
2 relating to the establishment of a public law school in the Rio  
3 Grande Valley.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

5 SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is  
6 amended by adding Section 61.0905 to read as follows:

7 Sec. 61.0905. RIO GRANDE VALLEY SCHOOL OF LAW. (a) The  
8 governing board of a university system may establish and operate,  
9 as a professional school of the system, a school of law in Cameron  
10 County or Hidalgo County as the governing board considers  
11 appropriate.

12 (b) In administering the law school, the governing board may  
13 prescribe courses leading to customary degrees offered at other  
14 leading American schools of law and may award those degrees.

15 (c) The governing board may assign responsibility for the  
16 management of the law school to a general academic teaching  
17 institution in the university system.

18 (d) The governing board may accept and administer gifts and  
19 grants from any public or private person or entity for the use and  
20 benefit of the law school. Notwithstanding any other provision of  
21 this section, establishment of a law school under this section is  
22 subject to the availability of funding, either through  
23 appropriation or from another source.

24 (e) The governing board of a university system that intends

1 to establish a law school under this section shall notify the Texas  
2 Higher Education Coordinating Board. If the coordinating board  
3 receives notification under this subsection from more than one  
4 governing board, the coordinating board shall determine which of  
5 those governing boards may establish a law school under this  
6 section. The coordinating board must base the determination on the  
7 need for a law school in a geographic area, potential student  
8 demand, available system resources, the feasibility of the specific  
9 proposal of each system, and other criteria the coordinating board  
10 considers appropriate.

11 (f) Before the governing board establishes a law school  
12 under this section, the governing board shall request the  
13 coordinating board to prepare a feasibility study to determine the  
14 actions the system must take to obtain accreditation of the law  
15 school. The coordinating board shall deliver a copy of the study to  
16 the governing board and to the chair of each legislative standing  
17 committee with jurisdiction over higher education.

18 SECTION 2. For the purposes of Section 61.0905, Education  
19 Code, as added by this Act, no state funds may be appropriated for a  
20 state fiscal biennium ending on or before August 31, 2027.

21 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
22 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
23 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
24 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
25 Act takes effect September 1, 2021.