

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 3003

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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Hearing Date: April 15, 2021 8:00 AM

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Austin, TX

Written Testimony Submitted on House Bill 3003

Thursday, April 15, 2021

Texas House Higher Education Committee

Submitted by Educate Texas

Honorable Chair Murphy and Members of the House Higher Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on House Bill 3003. Educate Texas, an initiative of the Communities Foundation of Texas, supports the vision that all Texas students, especially African American, Latino, and economically disadvantaged students, earn a postsecondary degree or credential that leads to a living wage and thriving communities.

COVID-19 has led to setbacks in the pursuit of this vision and 60x30TX broadly. The shifts in business practices that followed the pandemic have left many current and future members of the state's workforce displaced and without viable career paths. Economic recovery from this crisis will require a focused effort on reskilling and upskilling workers by linking education to high-value credentials relevant to the current market.

Community colleges, as the largest providers of workforce credentials in Texas, are uniquely poised to contribute to this economic recovery. Community colleges serve as a critical link between education and the workforce through their robust, regionally responsive credentialing, professional development, work-based learning, and other career-connected programs.

The Texas Reskilling & Upskilling through Education (TRUE) initiative leverages the expertise of community colleges, as well as their existing industry partnerships and labor market data, to develop credentials that return displaced Texans back to the workforce on an accelerated timeline.

TRUE would design sustainable pipelines that fill critical workforce needs across the state, identify and provide credentials that meet the purpose of 60x30TX, and expand employer-informed microcredentials and short-term certificates that allow displaced workers to find a rewarding place in the workforce in as little as a few weeks to six months.

TRUE is a career-connected, industry-responsive model that would lead to a stronger Texas economy. Texans are the greatest asset Texas has. Investing in Texans now will lead to long-term returns as displaced workers find places in industries that need them and ensure our economy not only survives these crises but thrives due to the investments the state makes today.

We appreciate the committee's consideration on this legislation and are glad to serve as a resource if there are any questions.

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