

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 584
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State Affairs
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Many IT positions at state agencies, such as information security positions, require a high degree of skill yet pay below the market rate for those skills. Currently, state guidelines recommend that all entry-level IT jobs should require graduation from a four-year college or university. Since state agencies cannot pay the market rate for new graduates, agencies rely on inter-agency transfers to fill positions. This has led to a workforce that skews older and often fails to fill entry-level positions. For example, more than a quarter of Department of Information Resources (DIR) employees will be eligible for retirement between FY 2022 and FY 2024 and nearly a third are classified as supervisors. While many state agencies have expressed interest in hiring community college graduates for IT positions, many also cite the state's compensation and classification system as a barrier to hiring more community college graduates. While the state has invested in community college apprenticeship programs such as Texas is IT (TXIT) and Texas Reskilling & Upskilling through Education (TRUE), the state has not successfully leveraged those funds to build its own IT workforce. C.S.H.B. 584 seeks to address these challenges with the state's IT workforce by authorizing DIR to enter into agreements with public junior college districts and public technical institutes to develop a state information technology credential that is tailored to address shortages in the state's IT workforce and by providing for a review of the state's position classification plan and a revision of relevant job descriptions to allow an associate degree together with this credential to substitute for a four-year baccalaureate degree.

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. 584 amends the Government Code to authorize the Department of Information Resources (DIR) to enter into an agreement with a public junior college district or public technical institute to offer a program leading to a state information technology credential to address shortages in the state information resources workforce. The bill requires such a program to be approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) in accordance with THECB guidelines and to satisfy the following requirements:

- develop the knowledge and skills necessary for an entry-level information technology position in a state agency; and
- include a one-year apprenticeship with DIR, another relevant state agency, or an applicable organization or regional network security center.

The bill requires DIR to annually analyze whether entering into such an agreement is appropriate to assist DIR in meeting staffing needs.

C.S.H.B. 584 authorizes DIR, in the event an information technology credentialing program is not fully funded through tuition and other district money available for that purpose, to use any money available to DIR to offer the program and to solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations from any public or private source for the purpose of offering the program.

C.S.H.B. 584 requires the executive director of DIR to update DIR's intra-agency career ladder program to ensure that an associate degree together with an information technology credential may be substituted for a four-year baccalaureate degree. The bill requires the classification officer in the state auditor's office to review the state's position classification plan to determine whether such a substitution may be made and to revise relevant job descriptions accordingly.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2023.

COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 584 may differ from the introduced in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute expands the scope of the authorization for DIR to enter into agreements to offer a program leading to a state information technology credential. The substitute authorizes DIR to enter into such an agreement with both public junior college districts and public technical institutes, whereas the introduced authorized DIR to enter into agreements only with public junior college districts.