

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1590
By: Burns
Higher Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

There is an issue with high-achieving Texans from underserved communities going out of state for their postsecondary education. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has reported that more than 15 percent of the top 10 percent of students in Black, Latino, and rural communities do not enroll directly in two-year or four-year institutions of higher education in Texas or enroll in institutions out of state. As such, there is a need to create a personal and professional development program to help guide these students throughout their time in higher education and beyond. C.S.H.B. 1590 seeks to address this issue by establishing the Texas Leadership Scholars program to provide academic achievement support and leadership development to eligible high school students with financial need.

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 rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1590 amends the Education Code to establish the Texas Leadership Scholars Program to serve as a merit-based scholarship and leadership opportunity program for high-achieving, emerging leaders with financial need administered by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The bill requires the THECB, using money appropriated or otherwise available for the purpose, to award scholarships and provide academic achievement support and leadership development to eligible students under the program. The bill requires a student to meet the following eligibility criteria for purposes of initially participating in the program:

- be a graduate of a public high school in Texas;
- either have qualified for automatic admission in a general academic teaching institution or be nominated by their high school and hold another academic distinction recognized by the THECB;
- be enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program at a general academic teaching institution;
- be economically disadvantaged, as determined by THECB rule; and
- comply with any additional requirement adopted by the THECB.

The bill conditions the student's continued participation in the program on meeting the following criteria:

- being enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program at a general academic teaching institution;
- maintaining a minimum overall grade point average as determined by THECB rule; and
- complying with any additional requirements adopted by the THECB.

C.S.H.B. 1590 authorizes the THECB to enter into agreements with general academic teaching institutions or other institutions of higher education to provide students in the program with the following:

- research-based support to make satisfactory academic progress and graduate on time; and
- leadership development opportunities, including:
 - program cohort learning communities;
 - mentoring, research, and internship opportunities;
 - networking with state government, business, and civic leaders; and
 - statewide cohort learning institutes or seminars.

The bill authorizes the THECB to solicit, accept, and spend grants, gifts, and donations from any public or private source for the purposes of the program. The bill requires the THECB to adopt rules for the administration of the program, including rules providing for the amount and permissible uses of a scholarship awarded under the program.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2023.

COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 1590 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.

Whereas both the introduced and substitute set out eligibility criteria for participation in the program, only the substitute includes the following criteria:

- graduation from a public high school in Texas;
- enrollment in a baccalaureate degree program at a general academic teaching institution; and
- compliance with any additional requirements adopted by the THECB.

Whereas the introduced made a student eligible for a program scholarship on the nomination by their school district, the substitute makes a student initially eligible to participate in the program on the nomination by their high school.

The substitute includes a provision absent from the introduced providing for a student's continuing eligibility to participate in the program. Whereas the introduced required a student to maintain a minimum overall grade point average at a general academic teaching institution as determined by THECB rule to be eligible to participate in the program, the substitute requires a student to maintain a minimum overall grade point average determined by THECB rule to continue participating in the program after establishing initial eligibility.

The substitute includes the following criteria for continued participation in the program, which did not appear in the introduced:

- enrollment in a baccalaureate degree program at a general academic teaching institution; and
- compliance with any additional requirements adopted by the THECB.

The substitute omits a requirement in the introduced for the THECB to adopt rules providing for student scholarship eligibility, satisfactory academic progress criteria, and program administration. The substitute includes a requirement absent from the introduced for the THECB to adopt rules providing for the permissible uses of an awarded scholarship.