

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 3631
By: Lalani
Higher Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

A 2021 survey by the Higher Education Research Institute found that 85 percent of college freshmen reported feeling mentally overwhelmed. Untreated mental health issues can lead students to drop out of school or even commit suicide. According to the Texas Department of State Health Services, the suicide rate for college students in Texas was 7.35 per 100,000 students in 2019. The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center found that the national six-year completion rate was 62.7 percent, while the six-year completion rate in Texas was 60.8 percent. There is a lack of awareness about on-campus mental health resources available to students. A 2019 survey by the National Alliance on Mental Illness found that only 23 percent of college students with mental health conditions reported using on-campus mental health services, citing barriers such as long wait times, stigma, and lack of awareness about available services. Combating mental health issues on campuses of higher institutions can lower these dropout rates. C.S.H.B. 3631 will ensure that all students entering an institution of higher education are given information about where they can find mental health services and how to access those services.

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. 3631 amends the Education Code to require each public institution of higher education to provide information regarding available mental health and suicide prevention services, including early warning signs and appropriate intervention, to all entering undergraduate, graduate, or professional students. The bill requires the information to include a campus map identifying any location at which mental health services are provided to students on campus and information regarding how to access the services. The bill requires any tour during an on-campus orientation for entering students, provided by such an institution, to identify at least one mental health services location that is available for use by all students of that institution. The bill applies beginning with entering students at public institutions of higher education for the 2023 fall semester.

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. 3631 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 changes a provision in the introduced that required an on-campus orientation for entering students to include a tour of any mental health services location to a provision that requires any tour during an on-campus orientation for entering students to identify at least one mental health services location that is available for use by all students of the institution.

The substitute includes a requirement that was not in the introduced for the campus map identifying any campus locations at which mental health services are provided to include information regarding how to access the services.