

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

S.B. 1517  
By: King  
Higher Education  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

The Texas Holocaust, Genocide, and Antisemitism Advisory Commission's 2022 "Study on Antisemitism in Texas" included a recommendation to consider prohibiting a state-funded college or university from implementing boycotts that would deprive students or faculty members of the ability to study or conduct research in or about a foreign country or to interact with its scholars or representatives. This recommendation came from interviews and conversations with students and college faculty who saw the Boycott, Divestments, and Sanctions (BDS) movement gaining momentum among students, departments, and academic units. The campaigns have sometimes led to antisemitic acts against Jewish students. The BDS campaign is a global movement that calls for economic, cultural, and academic sanctions against Israel--and only Israel. Since 2017, Texas has prohibited state agencies from contracting with companies that boycott Israel. S.B. 1517 seeks to extend that same concept to college campuses by prohibiting certain academic boycotts of foreign countries by public institutions of higher education. The bill would, however, allow for academic boycotts if the target of the boycott is included by the U.S. Department of State on a list of state sponsors of terrorism.

### **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**

S.B. 1517 amends the Education Code to prohibit a public institution of higher education from implementing an academic boycott of a foreign country that would prevent a student or faculty member of the institution from studying or conducting research in or about the country or interacting with the country's scholars or representatives. As an exception to that prohibition, however, the bill authorizes an institution to implement such an academic boycott of a foreign country included by the U.S. Department of State on a list of state sponsors of terrorism. The bill requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to adopt rules as necessary to implement these provisions.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2023.