By:  Bonnen H.J.R. No. 3

A JOINT RESOLUTION

proposing a constitutional amendment renaming the national research university fund as the Texas University Fund, providing for the appropriation of certain investment income from the economic stabilization fund to the Texas University Fund, excepting appropriations to and from the Texas University Fund from the constitutional limit on the rate of growth of appropriations, and appropriating money from the general revenue fund to the Texas University Fund to be spent for purposes of providing funding to certain public institutions of higher education to achieve national prominence as major research universities and drive the state economy.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  Section 49-g, Article III, Texas Constitution, is amended by adding Subsection (p) to read as follows:

(p)  On the first day of each state fiscal year, an amount, if the amount is greater than zero, equal to the lesser of $100 million or the interest and other earnings attributable to the investment of money in the economic stabilization fund for the preceding state fiscal year is appropriated from the economic stabilization fund to the comptroller of public accounts for the purpose of deposit to the credit of the Texas University Fund not later than the 90th day of the state fiscal year in which the appropriation is made. For purposes of this subsection, the amount of interest and other earnings attributable to the investment of money in the economic stabilization fund for a state fiscal year is computed by:

(1)  determining the amount of interest due to the fund for that fiscal year, including any interest credited to general revenue under Subsection (i) of this section;

(2)  adding to the amount determined under Subdivision (1) of this subsection an amount equal to the change in the fair market value of the fund between the last day of that fiscal year and the last day of the preceding state fiscal year; and

(3)  subtracting from the amount determined under Subdivision (2) of this subsection the amount of any expenses of managing the investments of money in the fund that are paid from the fund during that fiscal year.

SECTION 2.  Section 20, Article VII, Texas Constitution, is amended by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsections (i) and (j) to read as follows:

(a)  There is established the Texas University Fund [~~national research university fund~~] for the purpose of providing a dedicated, independent, and equitable source of funding to enable emerging research universities in this state to achieve national prominence as major research universities.

(i)  For purposes of Section 22, Article VIII, of this constitution:

(1)  money in the fund is dedicated by this constitution; and

(2)  an appropriation of money to the fund is an appropriation of state tax revenues dedicated by this constitution.

(j)  On January 1, 2024, the amount of $3.5 billion is appropriated from the general revenue fund to the comptroller of public accounts for the purpose of immediately depositing that amount to the credit of the Texas University Fund. The amount of $3.5 billion is appropriated from the Texas University Fund to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for the state fiscal biennium beginning September 1, 2023, for distribution to eligible institutions as provided by general law. This subsection expires January 1, 2026.

SECTION 3.  This proposed constitutional amendment shall be submitted to the voters at an election to be held November 7, 2023. The ballot shall be printed to permit voting for or against the proposition: "The constitutional amendment renaming the national research university fund as the Texas University Fund, providing for the appropriation of certain investment income from the economic stabilization fund to the Texas University Fund, excepting appropriations to and from the Texas University Fund from the constitutional limit on the rate of growth of appropriations, and appropriating $3.5 billion from the general revenue fund to the Texas University Fund to be spent for purposes of providing funding to certain public institutions of higher education to achieve national prominence as major research universities and drive the state economy."