

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Public Education
For HB 131

Compiled on: Tuesday, March 7, 2023 8:54 AM

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Hearing Date: March 7, 2023 8:00 AM

Larry Doc Hawthorne, Board members

Self

Hubbard, TX

Not all students will pursue a 4 year degree but may enter into the work force
This excuse absents for those student would be a step closer toward their career choice

Shannon Noble, Ms.

Texas Air Conditioning Contractors Association

Austin, TX

The biggest issue plaguing the HVAC industry over the last 30 years is finding qualified entry-level employees. The Texas Air Conditioning Contractors Association wholeheartedly supports HB 131 and our HVAC contractors would welcome student visitors to their workplaces. Thank you.

Gregory Vaughn

Texas Association of Workforce Boards

FRISCO, TX

The Texas Association of Workforce Boards (TAWB) respectfully submits the following testimony ON HB 131 to the House Public Education Committee.

TAWB represents the 28 local workforce development boards in Texas and the more than 700 business and community leaders across Texas who serve as volunteers on those boards. The 28 Local Workforce Development Boards in Texas direct federal, state, and local funding to workforce development programs. They are where “the rubber hits the road” when it comes to workforce development in their respective regions, with key functions including Employer Engagement, Workforce Stakeholder Partnerships, Career Pathways Development and Coordination with Education & Training Providers.

The individuals from the local workforce boards who participate in TAWB include both the professional staff that administer the boards’ activities, as well as local workforce board members from the area business community. These individuals are the ones on the front lines in Texas when it comes to aligning the needs of Texas employers with education and workforce training initiatives.

TAWB makes recommendations on workforce development, education and training from the employer’s perspective, in order to ensure a future workforce that will be ready to meet the needs of employers and grow the state’s economy. Several years ago, TAWB published an Education Paper, “The Workforce in Texas: Aligning Education to Meet the Needs of Texas Employers.” A prominent recommendation of that Paper was the implementation of a Pre-K to Careers Model and a Business Driven Education System to improve our education system and to further align education with employer needs. Key components of this Pre-K to Careers Model and Business Driven Education System include providing students from kindergarten through middle school and beyond with information and opportunities about career paths such as:

- Providing job-shadowing opportunities to enable students to explore career opportunities in the workplace
- Mentoring students in career pathways, and
- Providing opportunities for students to visit worksites

TAWB believes the provisions of HB 131 to allow a school district to excuse a student from attending school for a career investigation day to visit a professional at the professional’s workplace during the student’s junior and senior years of high school for the purpose of determining the student’s interest in pursuing a career in the professional’s field are aligned with our previous recommendations.

We wish to thank the members of the House Public Education for this opportunity to share information we trust will be helpful to you in your deliberations. TAWB stands ready to provide additional information during the 88th Texas Legislature.

Shannon Noble, Ms.

Texas Industrial Vocational Association

Austin, TX

The members of the Texas Industrial Vocational Association are the career and technology teachers who work to help their students earn specific workforce certificates and licenses. We encourage students to seek out internships and apprenticeships, and allowing them excused absences to visit a workplace under HB 131 will assist them in those efforts as well as in establishing relationships with potential employers. Thank you.

Robert Garay

Self

Houston, TX

Dear Members of the Public Education Committee,

My name is Robert Garay and I am providing testimony AGAINST HB 131. I live in TX House District 143, which is in Harris County.

While it is vital to have students think about their career after high school, this bill is too broad and shoulders all the burden of policy and procedure to local school districts and school boards. Theoretically you can have dozens of different programs with different requirements that become too burdensome for the TEA or state legislature to track and audit to ensure its success.

In addition, without specific guidance from the TEA or the Legislature on defining what careers are acceptable for career investigation day, you could have students seek excused absences for careers not conducive for the future success of the state. I also have logistical questions regarding taking students outside the classroom and ensuring they are not abusing the spirit of any program setup by the local school district. Any student who is outside the classroom without a certified instructor not learning classroom instruction becomes concerning for me.

We should be bringing career recruiters into the classroom, not have students go outside the classroom during the school day to seek it out on their own.

This bill, while admirable in intent and principle, has too many technical concerns to have my support in its current form.

Thank you for your attention, consideration, and the opportunity to provide public comment.