

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Higher Education
For HB 3486

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Hearing Date: April 10, 2023 10:00 AM

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Honorable Chair Kuempel and Members of the House Higher Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony for HB 3486 by Representative Turner. Philanthropy Advocates, a collaboration with Educate Texas, is a funders collaborative of over 55 Texas foundations. Members of Philanthropy Advocates are funders in communities across Texas – in rural, urban and suburban regions where we are deeply invested in our education systems. Together we advocate for public and higher education policies so that all Texas students can achieve their educational goals from cradle to career.

By 2030, over 60% of all Texas jobs will require some kind of postsecondary credential, but only 48% of adults in Texas today have a postsecondary credential. Our long-term competitiveness as a state will depend on our ability to attract and retain high quality jobs, which is dependent on our ability to educate Texans at a faster pace than we currently are achieving. A key factor to ensuring students not only access, but complete, their postsecondary credentials is the need for students to be able to seamlessly transfer course credits between institutions.

Philanthropy Advocates commissioned a report in 2021 to provide the Legislature with an overview of state policies supporting student transfer, a summary of key groups addressing transfer in Texas, and a discussion of strengths and challenges facing Texas students. Experts interviewed for the report indicated policies enacted by the Legislature support collaboration, provide a framework for learning outcomes, and serve to ease communication to students. Texas also has numerous statewide workgroups, inter-institutional committees and regional networks focused on transfer student success.

Despite the broad array of policies and partnerships, several critical challenges are impeding transfer outcomes. Challenges noted by participants of the report include a lack of accountability for transfer student outcomes and data and technology issues.

HB 3486 is a positive step forward in supporting student credit mobility and ease of transfer in their pursuits of postsecondary credentials. If enacted, HB 3486 would provide necessary clarity around acceptable courses for transfer among postsecondary fields of study. Additionally, it would illuminate where issues of credit transfer are taking place and identifies a process to handle disagreements about the application or denial of courses for transfer.

HB 3486 also creates a Texas Direct Associates Degree, which we believe improves postsecondary affordability for students by ensuring students have confidence that core courses they take at one college would be accepted upon transferring to a different college.

We appreciate the committee's consideration on this legislation and are glad to serve as a resource if there are any questions.