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| BILL ANALYSIS |

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| H.B. 5294 |
| By: Bonnen |
| Higher Education |
| Committee Report (Unamended) |

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| **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**  Medical schools in Texas currently have the authority to revise their academic standards for admission and to allow admission based on components like race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin. The bill author has informed the committee that such admissions policies may conflict with the state's prohibitions on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) offices and programs. The bill author has also informed the committee that current regulations allow the use of a pass/fail grading system within medical school curriculum, which does not monitor a student's true performance in a course. H.B. 5294 seeks to address these issues by requiring medical schools to ensure that coursework assesses performance based on an A to F grading system and to consider, for the purposes of admission, an applicant's performance on a standardized test appropriate for the program. The bill also prohibits a medical school from granting preference on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin to an applicant for admission or employment. |
| **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**  H.B. 5294 amends the Education Code to require each medical school, or any other public institution of higher education, or school, department, or college of such an institution, that awards medical degrees, to ensure that any coursework offered in the curriculum required for a medical degree or certificate assesses a student's performance on the coursework based on the assignment of a letter grade from A to F. The bill prohibits a medical school from offering such coursework, including any assignment or other component of the coursework, on a pass/fail basis.  H.B. 5294 requires a medical school, in making admissions decisions for a medical degree or certificate program, to consider an applicant's performance on a standardized test appropriate for the program that focuses on knowledge of and critical thinking applicable to science and medical practice but prohibits the applicant's performance on the standardized test from being used as the sole criterion for consideration of the applicant.  H.B. 5294 prohibits a medical school, except as required to comply with state or federal law, from revising its academic standards for the award of a degree or certificate, or for the admission of a student to the medical school or to a degree or certificate program, unless the school submits the following to the legislature and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board:   * a copy of the proposed standards; * a concise general statement of the reasons for the proposed standards; and * the date on which the proposed standards would become effective.   H.B. 5294 prohibits a medical school from granting preference on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin to an applicant for employment by the medical school or for admission to the medical school or to a degree or certificate program. The bill establishes that nothing in this provision may be construed as prohibiting bona fide qualifications based on sex that are reasonably necessary to the normal operation of a medical school.  The provisions of H.B. 5294 relating to admissions at medical schools apply beginning with admissions for the 2026 spring semester. Admissions for an academic period preceding that semester are governed by the law in effect immediately before the bill's effective date, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose. |
| **EFFECTIVE DATE**  On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2025. |