

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 125
By: Slawson
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The bill author has informed the committee that, while approximately 5.3 million Texans reside in rural areas, these communities are served by less than three percent of the state's physicians. The Texas Medical Association indicates that Texas' ratio of patient care physicians to people is well below the national average, and the bill author has further informed the committee that this gap presents health care shortages that may result in decreased access to care, poorer health outcomes, and economic strain for Texans in rural communities. According to the Office of the President of Tarleton State University, the university has received approval from the board of regents to start the process of developing a school of osteopathic medicine. H.B. 125 seeks to improve health care access for rural Texans and expand research opportunities to strengthen the state's medical innovation sector through the creation of the Tarleton State University College of Osteopathic Medicine.

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. 125 amends the Education Code to establish the Tarleton State University College of Osteopathic Medicine as a college of the Tarleton State University under the management and control of the board of regents of The Texas A&M University System with degrees offered under the name and authority of the Tarleton State University. The bill authorizes the board of regents to prescribe courses leading to customary degrees and to adopt policies for the operation, control, and management of the college as necessary for conducting a college of osteopathic medicine of the first class. The bill establishes that a teaching hospital the board of regents considers suitable may be provided by a public or private entity.

H.B. 125 classifies the Tarleton State University College of Osteopathic Medicine as a "medical and dental unit" for purposes of the Higher Education Coordinating Act of 1965 and as a "medical school" for purposes of provisions of that act relating to contracts for medical residency programs. The bill includes the college among the health-related institutions of higher education eligible to receive distributions from the permanent health fund for higher education for qualifying programs.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2025.