

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 5154
By: Wilson
Higher Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Joint Admission Medical Program (JAMP) was created as an innovative special pipeline program to assist highly motivated, economically disadvantaged students in preparing and succeeding in medical schools across Texas. JAMP is funded by the state legislature through a trusted program administered at the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, constituting a joint effort between the medical schools and the public and private institutions of higher education. The bill author has informed the committee that there is a need to update JAMP's governing statutes to provide for additional oversight, specifically when it comes to the reporting requirement for the JAMP Council, as well as to clarify provisions that have not been updated in a long time to help modernize standards and increase transparency. C.S.H.B. 5154 seeks to expand the type of information reported by the council and make certain other changes regarding the operation of JAMP, including requiring the development of an online feedback portal.

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

C.S.H.B. 5154 amends the Education Code to revise provisions specifying the purposes of the Joint Admission Medical Program (JAMP) administered by the Joint Admission Medical Program Council as follows:

- specifies that the services provided by JAMP for the support and encouragement of highly qualified, economically disadvantaged students pursuing a medical education include mentoring, academic support, and counseling and relief and are provided to support and encourage those students to complete a medical degree and meet state workforce needs;
- revises the provision establishing that one of JAMP's purposes is to guarantee the admission of those students to at least one participating medical school, subject to conditions prescribed under JAMP's governing statutes, by adding the specification that JAMP also facilitates such admission; and
- includes the following among the purposes of JAMP:
 - aligning statewide educational and workforce goals to increase medical jobs and stop workforce shortages; and
 - promoting the accessibility and equality of medical education by addressing statewide barriers to entry and participation for economically disadvantaged communities.

C.S.H.B. 5154 requires the chair of the JAMP Council to facilitate council meetings, ensure compliance with JAMP goals, and represent the council in interactions with relevant stakeholders, including the Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service and legislative committees. The bill requires the council to establish clear policies to ensure effective communication among council members, including the following:

- procedures for convening regular meetings to review JAMP implementation and evaluate outcomes;
- protocols for disseminating an agenda or report before a meeting;
- mechanisms for soliciting feedback from council members to promote transparency and collaboration; and
- procedures for promoting public meetings to students.

C.S.H.B. 5154 requires the council to provide notice of each council meeting, which must be posted in a place readily accessible and available to the general public at all times for at least 72 hours before the scheduled time of the meeting and include sufficient detail regarding the meeting's agenda to inform participants and the general public of the topics to be discussed or decided. The bill includes among the council's duties the pursuit of opportunities to increase scholarship money allocated to participating students to at least 30 percent of the total amount appropriated for purposes of JAMP without impeding the implementation of other JAMP functions and goals, including the following:

- coordinating efforts with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to request additional legislative appropriations;
- soliciting gifts, grants, and donations under applicable state law; and
- collaborating with private foundations, corporations, and entities to secure supplemental funding.

C.S.H.B. 5154 revises the information required to be contained in the council's biennial report to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives as follows:

- with respect to the requirement for the report to include information regarding any problems the council identifies in implementing JAMP and recommended solutions for those problems, specifies that such problems include external or internal challenges, deficiencies, or obstacles and that recommended solutions include recommendations for legislative action to streamline and enhance the implementation of JAMP;
- replaces the requirement to include the expenditure of any money received under JAMP's governing statutes, including legislative appropriations, with a requirement to include an accounting of all such money, including the following:
 - legislative appropriations and private funding sources;
 - breakdowns of disbursements;
 - the specific purposes for which money was used; and
 - a statement of the ending balance and any unobligated and unexpended money remaining for the state fiscal year; and
- includes the following among the required information:
 - the total number of students who are admitted to JAMP;
 - the number of students, disaggregated by year of enrollment, who, while enrolled in a baccalaureate, graduate, or professional degree program at a general academic teaching institution, private or independent institution of higher education, or participating medical school, as applicable:
 - were dismissed or withdrawn from JAMP by the council;
 - were placed on probation by the council; or
 - voluntarily withdrew from JAMP;
 - enrollment, withdrawal, and disciplinary data for those students for each academic year of such a baccalaureate, graduate, or professional degree program;
 - expenditures for graduate scholarships awarded to participating medical students, including:
 - the amount awarded and disbursed to each participating medical student;

- if there is unobligated and unexpended money that may be spent on graduate scholarships at the end of a state fiscal year, the reason why that money was not spent;
- any constraints delaying the reallocation of unobligated money to medical school scholarship recipients, including institutional policies; and
- a plan for applying or reallocating unobligated money in a manner that ensures accountability and sustainability;
- an estimate of the total amount of JAMP funding required for the next state fiscal biennium to maintain enrollment and operations and increase the graduate scholarship amount for medical school scholarship recipients, including requirements under provisions prescribing the council's duties, including:
 - projections based on current and anticipated scholarship demands;
 - recommendations for appropriations specifying the additional money needed; and
 - a formal request or petition for supplemental funding to ensure JAMP's financial stability and capacity to meet future demands;
- the amount of gifts, grants, and donations received by the council for JAMP purposes; and
- any notes, agendas, minutes, and reports made in regard to council meetings, including the dates, times, and locations of all council meetings, measures to ensure that students participating in JAMP are informed of upcoming council meetings in a timely and accessible manner, including through direct communication, policies to ensure the council does not violate state open meetings law, and provisions to allow student participation in the council meetings, including:
 - opportunities for students to attend meetings as observers, witnesses, and participants; and
 - procedures for soliciting student feedback and input before the adoption of significant decisions regarding JAMP.

The bill requires all data included in the report to be disaggregated by the type of institution and academic year and to be reported in a manner that ensures compliance with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

C.S.H.B. 5154 requires the council to develop and maintain a secure online portal to allow students in JAMP to submit anonymous or identified recommendations and complaints regarding JAMP. The online portal must meet the following criteria:

- ensure anonymity for all submissions submitted anonymously, using encryption and other privacy safeguards to protect the identity of the student making the submission;
- be accessible through different platforms, including mobile devices; and
- use an intuitive and user-friendly interface to encourage participation and ease of use.

The bill requires the council to review complaints or recommendations submitted through the online portal on a regular basis to identify potential areas for improvement. The bill requires a complaint or recommendation submitted through the online portal to be shared with the Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service and other relevant stakeholders, as authorized by law, and to be compiled into a report to be:

- included in the council's biennial report to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives;
- posted on the council's website; and
- submitted to participating students and the standing legislative committees with primary jurisdiction over higher education.

C.S.H.B. 5154 requires the council to establish procedures to ensure that complaints and recommendations submitted through the online portal are addressed in a timely and transparent manner, including by developing the following:

- a tracking system to monitor the resolution of complaints and recommendations;

- a mechanism to categorize submissions by topic and urgency to prioritize responses effectively; and
- a process for notifying a student of actions taken in response to the student's complaint or recommendation, excluding information that would violate a student's expectation of privacy.

The bill requires the council to promote the online portal to participating students, including by providing information during student orientation, via email, and through JAMP's website.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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

COMPARISON OF INTRODUCED AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 5154 may differ from the introduced in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute includes provisions relating to the following that are absent in the introduced:

- the purposes of JAMP;
- the duties of the chair of the council and the requirement for the council to ensure effective communication among its members;
- the manner in which the council must provide meeting notices;
- the duty of the council to pursue opportunities to increase scholarship money allocated to participating students; and
- the council's development and maintenance of a secure online portal to allow students in JAMP to submit anonymous or identified recommendations and complaints regarding JAMP.

Both versions require the council's biennial report to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives to include information on the number of students who, while enrolled in a baccalaureate, graduate, or professional degree program offered at a general academic teaching institution, private or independent institution of higher education, or participating medical school, were dismissed or withdrawn from JAMP by the council, placed on probation by the council, or voluntarily withdrew from JAMP. However, the substitute also requires the report to include enrollment, withdrawal, and disciplinary data for those students for each academic year of such a program, whereas the introduced did not.

The substitute makes the following changes with respect to the contents of the council's report, whereas the introduced did not:

- specifies that problems in implementing JAMP include external or internal challenges, deficiencies, or obstacles and that recommended solutions include recommendations for legislative action to streamline and enhance the implementation of JAMP; and
- replaces a requirement for the report to include the expenditure of JAMP money with a requirement to include an accounting of such money that includes specified components.

The substitute includes the following among the information required to be included in the council's report, whereas the introduced did not:

- the total number of students who are admitted to JAMP;
- an estimate of the total amount of JAMP funding required for the next state fiscal biennium to maintain enrollment and operations and increase the graduate scholarship amount for medical school scholarship recipients;
- the amount of gifts, grants, and donations received by the council for JAMP purposes; and
- any notes, agendas, minutes, and reports made in regard to council meetings.

With respect to the information required by both versions to be included in the council's report relating to expenditures for graduate scholarships awarded to participating medical students, the introduced specified that such information included the amount per student and any need to maintain the ending balance in lieu of reallocation to medical school scholarship recipients, whereas the substitute specifies that such information includes the following:

- the amount awarded and disbursed to each participating medical student;
- if there is unobligated and unexpended money that may be spent on graduate scholarships at the end of a state fiscal year, the reason why that money was not spent;
- any constraints delaying the reallocation of unobligated money to medical school scholarship recipients; and
- a plan for applying or reallocating unobligated money in a manner that ensures accountability and sustainability.

The substitute includes a requirement absent from the introduced for all data included in the council's report to be disaggregated by the type of institution and academic year and to be reported in a manner that ensures compliance with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.