

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 2055
By: West
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Texas Leadership Scholars Program was established by the 88th Legislature through the enactment of H.B. 1590 to provide full scholarships and leadership development opportunities to high-achieving, low-income students across Texas. The bill sponsor has informed the committee that this legislation ensured statewide representation by including all general academic teaching institutions in the program; however, during implementation, participation was limited to a select group of institutions, and preferential treatment was given to students from those schools, thereby causing concerns about this deviation from legislative intent by stakeholders in higher education and affected students. S.B. 2055 seeks to correct these structural limitations and reaffirm equitable access for all eligible institutions and students across Texas by clarifying that an "eligible institution," for purposes of the program, means any general academic teaching institution as defined by the Higher Education Coordinating Act of 1965.

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 rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 2 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 2055 amends the Education Code to modify the rulemaking authority granted under current law to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) for purposes of the administration of the Texas Leadership Scholars Program and participation in the program and to clarify that an "eligible institution," for purposes of the program, is any general academic teaching institution as defined by the Higher Education Coordinating Act of 1965. Accordingly, the bill does the following:

- replaces the requirement that the rules provide that a student may not receive a scholarship under the program for more than four years with a requirement that the rules provide that a student may not receive a scholarship under either the leadership or research scholarship program for more than four years per student per program;
- requires that the rules provide that each eligible institution receives at least one research scholarship award with remaining research scholarships awarded to eligible institutions based, in part, on the number of research doctoral degrees awarded by each institution; and
- prohibits the THECB, in adopting rules for the Texas Leadership Scholars Program, from adopting a rule that limits the general academic teaching institutions that may

participate in the program or that gives preference to students enrolled in certain general academic teaching institutions.

S.B. 2055 requires the THECB, as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date, to adopt rules to implement the bill's provisions.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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