

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.S.B. 2431  
By: Campbell  
Higher Education  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

According to a report by the Modern Language Association, the number of college students in the United States enrolled in a foreign language course was approximately 1.2 million in 2021, which marks a roughly 29 percent drop since 2009 levels. The bill sponsor has informed the committee that this decrease in foreign language proficiency may present issues across several industries that are projected to have a higher demand for workers who speak a language other than English; for example, according to a 2018 survey of U.S. employers published by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, with a five-year outlook, 64 percent of employers in the health care and social assistance sectors and 59 percent of employers in the trade sector expected increased demand for employees with foreign language skills. Furthermore, the bill sponsor has informed the committee that there are national security implications of decreases in college students with foreign language proficiency, pointing to the lack of proficient Arabic speakers in federal intelligence agencies to translate surveillance information ahead of the September 11 attacks. As such, the bill sponsor has informed the committee that a continued lack of multilingual professionals in both the public and private sectors could significantly undermine the strength and competitiveness of the U.S. economy and national security. C.S.S.B. 2431 seeks to address this issue by requiring public institutions of higher education to provide an option for students participating in study abroad components or programs to receive a foreign language credit for purposes of gaining proficiency.

### **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 1 of this bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

C.S.S.B. 2431 amends the Education Code to require a public institution of higher education that, through any baccalaureate degree program, offers a study abroad component or program in a location where a language other than English is primarily spoken to provide, in accordance with rules adopted under the bill's provisions, an option that allows a student enrolled in the study abroad component or program to earn foreign language credit as part of that component or program for the purpose of providing the opportunity for students to gain proficiency in a foreign language. The bill requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to adopt rules as necessary to implement that requirement, including rules that do the following:

- define the study abroad components or programs; and
- prescribe the manner in which a student may earn foreign language credit as part of such a component or program.

The bill's provisions apply beginning with the 2026-2027 academic year.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

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

### **COMPARISON OF SENATE ENGROSSED AND SUBSTITUTE**

While C.S.S.B. 2431 may differ from the engrossed in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the engrossed and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute revises the requirement of the engrossed for the provision of an option to earn foreign language credit as follows:

- removes a private or independent institution of higher education that offers an applicable study abroad program through any baccalaureate degree program from the entities subject to the requirement;
- specifies that a public institution of higher education that, through any baccalaureate degree program, offers a study abroad component in a location where a language other than English is primarily spoken is included among the entities subject to the requirement; and
- requires the provision of the option to be in accordance with the rules adopted by the THECB.

The substitute replaces the authorization of the engrossed for the THECB to establish procedures and adopt rules to implement the bill's requirement with a requirement that the THECB adopt rules as necessary to implement the bill's requirement and specifies the rules that must be included, which the engrossed did not do.

The substitute changes the academic year in which the bill's provisions apply from beginning with the 2025-2026 academic year, as in the engrossed, to beginning with the 2026-2027 academic year.