

By: González of El Paso

H.B. No. 5275

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to measures to ensure the safety of individuals with disabilities during an emergency situation at public postsecondary institutions.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 51.217(b), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b) An institution shall adopt and implement a multihazard emergency operations plan for use at the institution. The plan must address mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The plan must provide for:

(1) employee training in responding to an emergency;

(2) mandatory drills to prepare students, faculty, and employees for responding to an emergency;

(3) measures to ensure coordination with the Department of State Health Services, local emergency management agencies, law enforcement, health departments, and fire departments in the event of an emergency; ~~and~~

(4) the implementation of a safety and security audit as required by Subsection (c); and

(5) measures for ensuring that, during an emergency situation, students, institution personnel, and guests with disabilities are provided equal access to safety based on the rules adopted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board under

1 Section 61.06643, including the development of an emergency plan
2 that will accommodate individuals with different disabilities and
3 provide them with access to emergency evacuation assistance devices
4 in appropriate circumstances.

5 SECTION 2. Subchapter E, Chapter 51, Education Code, is
6 amended by adding Section 51.222 to read as follows:

7 Sec. 51.222. EMERGENCY EVACUATION ASSISTANCE DEVICES
8 REQUIRED. (a) In this section, "institution of higher education"
9 has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

10 (b) For each building that is located on the campus of an
11 institution of higher education and that has two or more floors, the
12 institution shall install on each floor emergency evacuation
13 assistance devices for use by individuals with disabilities who
14 require mobility assistance.

15 (c) An institution may use any available revenue, including
16 grants under Section 61.06644 and legislative appropriations, and
17 may solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations from any public
18 or private source for the purposes of this section.

19 SECTION 3. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is
20 amended by adding Sections 61.06643 and 61.06644 to read as
21 follows:

22 Sec. 61.06643. RULES REGARDING MULTHAZARD EMERGENCY
23 OPERATIONS PLAN PROVISIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES. (a)
24 The board shall adopt rules for the required provisions in an
25 institution's multihazard emergency operations plan under Section
26 51.217(b)(5) to ensure the safety of students, institution
27 personnel, and guests with disabilities during an emergency

1 situation.

2 (b) In adopting rules under Subsection (a), the board shall
3 consult with:

4 (1) the advisory council on postsecondary education
5 for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities
6 established under Section [61.06641](#);

7 (2) the Governor's Committee on People with
8 Disabilities; and

9 (3) the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities.

10 (c) An institution must follow the rules adopted by the
11 board under Subsection (a) in adopting and implementing the
12 institution's multihazard emergency operations plan under Section
13 [51.217](#).

14 Sec. 61.06644. EMERGENCY EVACUATION ASSISTANCE DEVICES FOR
15 INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES GRANT PROGRAM. (a) The board shall
16 establish and administer the emergency evacuation assistance
17 devices for individuals with disabilities grant program to provide
18 grants to institutions of higher education to enable those
19 institutions to purchase and install, and to train institution
20 personnel to operate, any emergency evacuation assistance devices
21 required under Section [51.222](#).

22 (b) In awarding grants under this section, the board shall
23 give priority to institutions that demonstrate the highest need
24 based on the number of students on the institution's campus who
25 would require an emergency evacuation assistance device in an
26 emergency situation.

27 (c) A grant provided under this section:

1 (1) must be used for purchasing and installing any
2 emergency evacuation assistance devices required under Section
3 51.222; and

4 (2) may be used to provide any training that is
5 necessary for institution personnel to:

6 (A) administer the institution's evacuation plan
7 with respect to the devices; or

8 (B) assist other individuals in operating the
9 devices.

10 (d) The board may solicit and accept gifts, grants, and
11 donations from any public or private source for purposes of this
12 section.

13 (e) The board shall adopt rules for the administration of
14 this section, including rules creating a process for institutions
15 of higher education to apply for grants, establishing procedures
16 and criteria for evaluating those applications and awarding the
17 grants, and verifying that grant funds awarded under this section
18 are used appropriately.

19 SECTION 4. As soon as practicable after the effective date
20 of this Act but not later than May 1, 2026, the Texas Higher
21 Education Coordinating Board shall adopt the rules required by
22 Sections 61.06643 and 61.06644, Education Code, as added by this
23 Act.

24 SECTION 5. Section 51.222, Education Code, as added by this
25 Act, applies beginning with the 2026-2027 academic year.

26 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
27 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as

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1 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
2 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
3 Act takes effect September 1, 2025.