

By: Hughes

S.B. No. 1273

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to establishing the Higher Education Research Security Council.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter 2, Chapter 51, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 51.957 to read as follows:

Sec. 51.957. HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH SECURITY COUNCIL.

(a) In this section:

(1) "Council" means the Higher Education Research Security Council established under this section.

(2) "Postsecondary educational institution" means an institution of higher education or a private or independent institution of higher education, as those terms are defined by Section 61.003.

(3) "Tier one research institution" means a postsecondary educational institution designated as R1: very high spending and doctorate production in the 2025 Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education published by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research.

(b) The Higher Education Research Security Council is established to promote secure academic research at tier one research institutions while mitigating the risk of foreign espionage and interference.

(c) The council is composed of each research security

1 officer designated under Section 51.956.

2 (d) A council member serves at the will of the person who
3 designated the member.

4 (e) A vacancy on the council shall be filled in the same
5 manner as the original designation.

6 (f) The council member designated under Section 51.956 for
7 The Texas A&M University System shall serve as the initial
8 presiding officer of the council.

9 (g) The council shall:

10 (1) identify best practices for a tier one research
11 institution to conduct research securely while mitigating the
12 threat of foreign espionage and interference;

13 (2) develop a research security policy that a tier one
14 research institution may adopt to improve research security;

15 (3) establish an accreditation process under which the
16 council may award a tier one research institution an accreditation
17 for security excellence;

18 (4) promote attendance at the annual academic security
19 and counter exploitation program seminar offered by The Texas A&M
20 University System; and

21 (5) develop and offer an annual training program for
22 tier one research institution security officers that includes:

23 (A) background and academic history checks of
24 researchers; and

25 (B) research security and integrity tools and
26 software that may be used to prevent the loss of intellectual
27 capital.

1 (h) The council shall meet at least once each quarter.

2 (i) A meeting conducted under Subsection (h) may be in
3 person or by video conference call, as determined by the presiding
4 officer.

5 (j) The council shall prepare and submit to the attorney
6 general's office and to the presiding officer of each legislative
7 committee with primary jurisdiction over higher education an annual
8 report on the status of research security at tier one research
9 institutions and any associated recommendations.

10 (k) A report submitted under Subsection (j) is confidential
11 and is not subject to disclosure under Chapter 552, Government
12 Code.

13 (l) The council may solicit and accept gifts, grants, and
14 donations for purposes of this section but may not solicit or accept
15 a gift, grant, or donation from China, Iran, North Korea, Russia, or
16 any other country designated as a country of particular concern in
17 the United States secretary of state's most recent designations
18 under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C.
19 Section 6401 et seq.).

20 SECTION 2. (a) Not later than October 1, 2025, the
21 appropriate entities shall designate the members of the Higher
22 Education Research Security Council established under Section
23 51.957, Education Code, as added by this Act.

24 (b) Not later than January 1, 2026, the Higher Education
25 Research Security Council established under Section 51.957,
26 Education Code, as added by this Act, shall hold its initial
27 meeting.

1 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.