

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

S.B. 1780  
By: Creighton  
Higher Education  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken an unprecedented toll on families, businesses, and the state's economy and health care infrastructure. There have been calls for the state to do more to protect public health in Texas and support pandemic and epidemic disaster preparedness efforts. S.B. 1780 seeks to provide for the establishment of the Texas Epidemic Public Health Institute, which, through a network of public health professionals, community health workers, state and local public health agencies, health care organizations, universities throughout Texas, and others, will coordinate state efforts to provide such protection and support.

### **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**

S.B. 1780 amends the Education Code to require the board of regents of The University of Texas System to establish and maintain the Texas Epidemic Public Health Institute at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. The administration of the institute is under the direction of the chancellor of The University of Texas System and the board of regents through the president of the health science center.

S.B. 1780 requires the institute to establish and maintain a public health reserve network of public health professionals, community health workers, state and local public health agencies, health care organizations, universities throughout Texas, and other relevant entities and persons for the purpose of coordinating efforts to protect public health in Texas and support pandemic and epidemic disaster preparedness and response components of the state emergency management plan. The bill requires the Department of State Health Services to provide the institute with access to relevant and timely data necessary for the institute to perform its duties and authorizes the institute to accept gifts, grants, and donations from any source for the purposes of the institute.

S.B. 1780 requires the institute to commission a biennial independent financial audit of its activities from a certified public accounting firm. The bill requires the institute to provide the audit to the comptroller of public accounts and requires the comptroller to review and evaluate the audit and biennially issue a public report of that review. The implementation of a provision of the bill regarding the establishment of the institute by the board of regents is mandatory only if a specific appropriation is made for that purpose.

S.B. 1780 amends the Government Code to authorize the state emergency management plan to include provisions for protecting public health.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2021.