

SUBJECT: Establishing the Texas Woman's University System

COMMITTEE: Higher Education — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 10 ayes — Murphy, Pacheco, Cortez, Frullo, Muñoz, Ortega, Parker, Raney, C. Turner, J. Turner

0 nays

1 absent — P. King

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Ben Stratmann, Dallas Regional Chamber; Stephanie Hoffman; Thomas Parkinson)

Against — None

On — Dawna-Diamond Tyson and Kathleen Wu, Texas Woman's University Board of Regents; Carine Feyten, Texas Womans University

BACKGROUND: Education Code ch. 107 establishes Texas Woman's University (TWU) as an institution of higher education for women with its main campus at Denton. TWU was founded in 1901 and is the largest public university in the nation primarily for women. In addition to its main campus, TWU has two health science centers located in Dallas and Houston.

Interested parties note that providing a framework for TWU to become a university system would lead to increased enrollment and help Texas meet its workforce needs, including in nursing and other allied health professions, and could be accomplished within TWU's existing resources.

DIGEST: HB 2705 would establish the Texas Woman's University System as a woman-focused system composed of Texas Woman's University, Texas Woman's University at Dallas, and Texas Woman's University at Houston. The Dallas and Houston campuses would be classified as general academic institutions.

The bill would require the board of regents of the university system to appoint a chief executive officer to also serve as the president of Texas Woman's University and would establish that each of the component institutions was under the management and control of the system board. The board of regents would determine how certain state funds were allocated to the component institutions.

The bill would make conforming changes to provide for the transition of the Texas Woman's University to the Texas Woman's University System, including establishing concurrent jurisdiction of campus security personnel and police officers of a municipality in which a component institution of the system was located.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2021.