

SUBJECT: Allowing charter schools to participate in JET Grant program

COMMITTEE: International Relations and Economic Development — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 5 ayes — Button, C. Morales, C. Bell, Metcalf, Ordaz Perez

1 nay — Beckley

3 absent — Canales, Hunter, Larson

WITNESSES: For — Christinn Jean, Southwest Preparatory Charter School District; Narciso Garcia, Vanguard Academy Public Charter School; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Charles Cohn, Angels Care & Learning Center; Lillian Painter, Dallas County Commissioners Court; Tom Hedrick, Dillon Joyce Ltd; Daniel Womack, Dow, Inc.; Charles Gaines, Raise Your Hand Texas; Mike Meroney, Texas Association of Manufacturers; Justin Yancy, Texas Business Leadership Council; Chris Noonan, Texas Chemical Council; Starlee Coleman, Texas Public Charter Schools Association; Erin Valdez, Texas Public Policy Foundation; Brooke Freeland)

Against — None

On — Mary York, Texas Workforce Commission; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Heather Mauze, Texas Education Agency)

BACKGROUND: Education Code, ch. 134 establishes the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) Grant Program to provide grants to defray the start-up costs associated with the development of new career and technical education programs at public junior colleges, public technical institutes, public state colleges, and independent school districts that meet certain requirements.

DIGEST: HB 618 would extend eligibility to participate in the Jobs and Education for Texans Grant Program to open-enrollment charter schools that had entered into a partnership with a public junior college, public technical institute, or public state college for the purpose of promoting career and

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technical education or offering dual credit courses to the district's or school's students.

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.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

HB 618 would allow charter schools to apply for funding from the Jobs and Education for Texans (JET) Grant Program. This would align charter schools with school districts in their ability to seek grant funding to purchase equipment for use in career and technical education (CTE) classes.

One charter school in South Texas built a center for innovation to help high school students gain entry into high-demand careers after graduation but was deemed ineligible for a JET grant to purchase medical equipment for student learning. Allowing charter schools to increase CTE offerings that lead to a degree or certification in a high-demand occupation would help Texas meet its higher education goals.

**CRITICS
SAY:**

HB 618 could result in fewer grants going to district schools where the vast majority of Texas students are educated because JET grant applications already exceed available funding.