

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
79R12513 JRJ-F

H.B. 868  
By: Ritter (Williams)  
S/C on Higher Education  
5/11/2005  
Engrossed

### **AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Current law does not provide for a research center that specializes in deaf education. The deaf education program at Lamar University has gained both regional and national attention for the quality of its programs and the preparation and accomplishments of its graduates. Lamar is the only institution in Texas, and one of only seven schools in the nation, that offers a doctoral degree in deaf education. Collegial relationships among the deaf education, audiology, and speech-language pathology programs at Lamar University offer many unique collaborative opportunities for the study of these communication areas. These programs provide students, faculty, colleagues, citizens, and community leaders with a wide array of educational and research benefits.

H.B. 868 designates the deaf education aspect of the Department of Communications Disorders and Deaf Education as the Lamar University Center for Excellence in Deaf Studies and Deaf Education. This change will allow the university to receive grants and outside funding sources for the purpose of deaf education that the university is currently not able to obtain. The establishment of the Lamar University Center for Excellence in Deaf Studies and Deaf Education is in name only and should have no fiscal impact to the state.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

### **SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter E, Chapter 96, Education Code, by adding Section 96.708 , as follows:

Sec. 96.708. LAMAR UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN DEAF STUDIES AND DEAF EDUCATION. (a) Defines "board" and "center."

(b) Requires the board of regents of the Texas State University System (board) to establish the Lamar University Center for Excellence in Deaf Studies and Deaf Education (university) (center) for the purposes of advancing deaf education programs in Texas through certain methods.

(c) Requires the center to develop a strategic plan to guide and evaluate the center's progress toward achieving the purposes of the center in accordance with this section. Sets forth certain requirements for the strategic plan.

(d) Provides that the organization, control, and management of the center are vested in the board.

(e) Requires the board to select a location for the center at the university.

(f) Authorizes the board to solicit, accept, and administer gifts and grants from any public or private source for the use and benefit of the center.

(g) Authorizes the board to use any available funds, including legislative appropriations made to the university for instruction, operations, or infrastructure support, federal funds, or gifts or grants to establish or operate the center.

SECTION 2. Requires the board, subject to the availability of funding, to establish the center as provided by Section 96.708, Education Code, as added by this Act, not later than January 1, 2007.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2005.