BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center   H.B. 2978

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Education

5/18/2007

Committee Report (Amended)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Children need to be encouraged to enroll in more math and science related classes in order to remain competitive on a national and global level in those fields of study. Currently, Texas lags behind most of its key competitor states in the number of engineering and computer science degrees awarded to graduating students, ranking ninth of among the 10 most populous states in the number of degrees awarded per 1,000 students in science and engineering fields.

H.B. 2978 requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to design and administer a one-week summer program to take place on campuses that offer engineering degree programs and establish and administer a degree scholarship program for students who graduate with certain credentials.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Sections 61.791 and 61.792, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 61, Education Code, by adding Subchapter Q, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER Q. ENGINEERING RECRUITMENT PROGRAMS

Sec. 61.791. ENGINEERING SUMMER PROGRAM. (a) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to establish and administer, using funds appropriated for that purpose, a one-week summer program to take place on the campus of each general academic teaching institution that offers an engineering degree program. Requires the summer program to be designed for middle and high school students and to expose those students to math, science, and engineering concepts that a student in an engineering degree program may encounter.

(b) Requires THECB by rule to establish the requirements for admission to a summer program established under this section. Requires THECB, in adopting rules under this subsection, to consider the demographics of the state and adopt rules that encourage the program to enroll students in the program that reflect the demographics of the state. Requires the governing board of each institution to which this section applies to cooperate with THECB in administering this section.

Sec. 61.792. ENGINEERING SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM. (a) Requires THECB to establish and administer, using funds appropriated for that purpose, scholarships for students pursuing a degree in engineering at a general academic teaching institution.

(b) Requires a student to meet certain qualifications set forth in this subsection to qualify for a scholarship under this section.

(c) Requires THECB to adopt rules as necessary for the administration of this section, including rules providing for the determination of the amount of each scholarship.

Sec. 61.793. FUNDING. Requires THECB to administer this subchapter using available appropriations and gifts, grants, and donations made for the purposes of this subchapter.

SECTION 2. (a) Makes application of Subchapter Q, Chapter 61, Education Code, as added by this Act, prospective to the 2007-2008 academic year.

(b) Requires THECB to adopt rules for the administration of Subchapter Q, Chapter 61, Education Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after this Act takes effect. Authorizes THECB, for that purpose, to adopt the rules in the manner provided by law for emergency rules.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage September 1, 2007.

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE CHANGES

Amends H.B. 2978 (House engrossed version), in SECTION 1 of the bill, by striking Subdivisions (2) and (3), Section 61.792(b), Education Code (page 2, lines 8 through 18), to require a student to have graduated from a high school with a grade point average of at least 3.5 on a four-point scale or the equivalent in mathematics and science courses offered under the recommended or advanced high school program under Section 28.025(a), and maintain an overall grade point average of at least 3.0 on a four-point scale at the general academic teaching institution in which the student is enrolled.