

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
80R2030 RMB-D

S.B. 212
By: Fraser
Finance
2/5/2007
As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Tarleton State University System Center – Central Texas (Tarleton – CT) opened in the fall of 1999. Currently, all available space is fully utilized and options for responding to increased demand are very limited. Tarleton – CT is presently renting and/or borrowing classroom space from the local independent school district and a community college. These other institutions have priority use of the facilities, therefore 80 percent of the center's classes must be scheduled after 4:00 pm. By not having one location where both day and night classes are offered, Tarleton – CT students are at a disadvantage in earning a bachelor's degree.

In its December 2006 *Regional Plan for Higher Education, Summary of Needs in Central Texas*, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board recognized the need to accommodate enrollment increases in Central Texas stating that "Tarleton State University-Central Texas University System Center in Killeen could help accommodate expanding demand."

Additionally, the United States Congress provided for conveyance of approximately 700 acres of land to the Texas A&M University System for the purpose of establishing Texas A&M University – Central Texas (which Tarleton – CT will become when a statutory full time student threshold is met). Fort Hood supported the effort to convey part of its base for this center as base leadership believes that its soldiers and their families deserve access to public upper-level educational opportunities.

Tuition revenue bonds in the amount of \$25 million were authorized for Texas A&M University – Central Texas during the 79th Legislature, 3rd Called Session, 2006 in Section 55.1761(d), Education Code. However, the school is not eligible to receive the bonds until it reaches an enrollment equivalent of 1,500 full-time students for one semester.

As proposed, S.B. 212 authorizes the Texas A&M University System to issue the previously authorized revenue bonds when the institution reaches the enrollment equivalent prescribed by Section 87.861(d), Education Code, currently set at 1,000 full-time students for one semester. This change would make the statutes regarding tuition revenue bonds and stand-alone status consistent with each other and hasten the funding mechanism necessary to construct a building to house the institution's administration and instruction functions.

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 Section 55.1751(d), Education Code, to replace Texas A&M University – Central Texas with the Tarleton State University System Center – Central Texas in Killeen. Specifies that enrollment must reach the amount specified in Section 87.861(d), Education Code, (1,000 full-time students in a semester), rather than 1,500 full-time students in a semester for Texas A&M University to be eligible to issue bonds for facilities at Texas A&M University – Central Texas.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2007.