

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
84R13383 JSL-D

H.B. 658
By: Zerwas et al. (Kolkhorst)
Higher Education
4/22/2015
Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

For the past 15 years, Fort Bend County has maintained a partnership with Wharton County Junior College to operate a small extension program in Fort Bend County. Due to rapid population growth and significant industrial expansion in Fort Bend County, the limited partnership with Wharton County Junior College can no longer meet the high-tech and advanced workforce needs of the area. Community leaders and private entities in the area have committed to donate \$30 million to add a full Texas State Technical College (TSTC) campus in Fort Bend County, the largest donation in TSTC history.

Fort Bend County is one of the fastest growing areas in the country and undergoing a significant industrial expansion. Currently the county's demand for mid-level technical jobs exceeds the number of workers to fill them by 10 percent. Over 50,000 new technical jobs are projected in the area in the next 15 years. The median yearly salary for jobs requiring these types of technical degrees is in the excess of \$48,000. A study commissioned by The George Foundation and the Henderson-Wessendorff Foundation suggests that providing an additional 1,000 students with a technical/vocational education would add \$800 million to \$1 billion to the local economy.

This bill establishes a TSTC campus in the City of Richmond in Fort Bend County and adds Fort Bend County to the list of counties exempted from needing approval from the regional coordinating board to introduce technical-vocational programs.

H.B. 658 amends current law relating to the creation of a campus of the Texas State Technical College System in Fort Bend County.

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 135.02(a), Education Code, to include a campus located in Fort Bend County in the list of locations of which the Texas State Technical College System is composed.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 135.04(b), Education Code, to provide that approval of technical-vocational programs under this section does not apply to Brown, McLennan, Cameron, Fort Bend, and Potter counties.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2015.