

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
87R12135 JRJ-D

S.B. 1860
By: Powell
Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA), passed in December of 2020, included the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Simplification Act, the largest rewrite of federal student financial need calculations since 1991. As a result of this legislation, the FAFSA used by students and institutions of higher education to determine eligibility for most federal financial aid will be extensively revised beginning with applications for aid in the 2023-2024 academic year.

Issue: Electronic TASFA

H.B. 2140 (86th Legislature) requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to create an electronic version of the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA). TASFA collects information similar to FAFSA to help determine eligibility for state (or institutional) financial aid programs administered by institutions of higher education in the state of Texas. H.B. 2140 states that the act applies beginning with the applications for aid submitted for the 2022-2023 academic year. However, the FAFSA Simplification Act takes effect with respect to applications for aid for the 2023-2024 academic year.

Because TASFA mirrors FAFSA, the agency will need to build the electronic TASFA platform by fall 2021 based on the existing FAFSA to meet the H.B. 2140 deadline. When the new FAFSA is released in fall of 2022, the agency would then need to rebuild the platform to match the new version.

S.B. 1860, 87th Legislature

- Delays implementation of the electronic TASFA to applications submitted for the 2023-24 academic year to support a more efficient and seamless implementation.
- Delaying implementation of the electronic TASFA requirement to align with implementation of the new FAFSA would avoid significant work that would be rendered redundant within a year.
- Students will continue to have full access to the existing fillable PDF TASFA for the 2022-23 academic year.

As proposed, S.B. 1860 amends current law relating to creating an electronic application system for state student financial assistance.

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 2, Chapter 801 (H.B. 2140), Acts of the 86th Legislature, Regular Session, 2019, to provide that the changes in law made by this Act apply beginning with applications for state student financial assistance submitted for the 2023-2024 academic year, rather than for the 2022-2023 academic year.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2021.