

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2140
By: Neave
Higher Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been suggested that the Texas Application for State Financial Aid, which is used to collect information to help determine eligibility for state student financial aid programs administered by institutions of higher education, uses an antiquated submission process requiring the application to be printed out and submitted as a paper document. C.S.H.B. 2140 seeks to modernize this submission process and increase access to the student financial aid application process by providing for the electronic submission of the application.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2140 amends the Education Code to require the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to adopt procedures to allow a person to complete and submit the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA) or a similar application for state student financial assistance by electronic submission through the website through which the coordinating board provides the common admission application form. The bill requires the coordinating board to appoint an advisory committee composed of financial aid personnel at public institutions of higher education and stakeholders who represent the needs of interested students to assist the coordinating board in adopting the procedures and to develop recommendations for that purpose. The bill requires the coordinating board, not later than January 1, 2021, to report the recommendations to the standing committee of each house of the legislature with jurisdiction over higher education. The bill's provisions relating to the advisory committee and report expire January 1, 2023.

C.S.H.B. 2140 requires the coordinating board to continuously maintain an online database of public institutions of higher education to which state student financial assistance may be applied. The bill establishes that the personal information of an individual maintained by the coordinating board for TASFA purposes is confidential and exempt from disclosure under state public information law. The bill authorizes the coordinating board to adopt rules as necessary to implement the bill's provisions. The bill applies beginning with applications for state student financial assistance submitted for the 2022-2023 academic year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2019.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 2140 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

The substitute specifies that the website through which a person will be allowed to complete and submit the TASFA is the website through which the coordinating board provides the common admission application form.

The substitute changes the academic year in which the bill's provisions begin to apply.

The substitute includes the following:

- a temporary provision requiring the coordinating board to appoint an advisory committee to assist in adopting the application procedures and to report the advisory committee's recommendations to the standing committee of each house of the legislature with jurisdiction over higher education;
- a provision establishing the confidentiality of personal information maintained by the coordinating board and an exemption of such information from state public information law; and
- an authorization for the coordinating board to adopt rules as necessary to implement the bill's provisions.