

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

C.S.H.B. 3601  
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Higher Education  
Committee Report (Substituted)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

It has been noted that the Texas State Guard could benefit from additional ways to improve recruitment and retention in order to meet Governor Abbott's target to double the authorized forces of the Guard by 2021. C.S.H.B. 3601 seeks to provide an incentive for that purpose by authorizing the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to recognize competency-based degree plans for members of the state military forces.

### **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. 3601 amends the Education Code to authorize the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to approve a public institution of higher education recognized by the coordinating board to offer a degree in coordination with the Texas Military Department that uses alternative methods of determining mastery of program content, including competency-based education. The bill establishes eligibility requirements for such a degree, including satisfying the minimum active military service obligation for certain types of degrees based on the number of years of service. The bill authorizes the coordinating board to propose rules to establish requirements under which a person's training and experience acquired during military service and verified by the department serve as proof of the person's demonstration of subject matter knowledge. The bill applies beginning with degree plans offered for enrollment for the 2020-2021 academic year.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2019.

### **COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE**

While C.S.H.B. 3601 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 changes a requirement for the coordinating board to accredit, or otherwise approve an accrediting organization recognized by the coordinating board to accredit, a certain

degree plan to an authorization for the coordinating board to approve a public institution of higher education recognized by the coordinating board to offer such a degree.

The substitute changes a requirement for the coordinating board to propose certain rules to an authorization and does not include a provision requiring the coordinating board to adopt rules for the implementation and administration of the accreditation of the degree plans.