

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1504
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Public Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been noted that there should be more opportunities for learning about different cultures and ethnicities in public schools. Specifically, many have pointed to the underrepresentation of Hispanic culture, African-American culture, Asian-American culture, and indigenous culture in the Texas public school curriculum and have highlighted the importance of accurately representing this history in Texas. The Texas Education Agency has approved Mexican-American and African-American studies as elective courses for high schools, but because these courses do not fulfil certain high school graduation requirements, they have failed to gain widespread popularity and adoption. C.S.H.B. 1504 seeks to address this issue by providing for these existing ethnic studies courses to be counted toward the social studies credits required for graduation and by making ethnic studies courses an established component of the social studies foundation curriculum.

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 this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 1504 amends the Education Code to require each public school district that offers kindergarten through grade 12 to offer ethnic studies, including Mexican American and African American studies, as a component of the foundation curriculum in social studies. The bill adds to the curriculum requirements for the foundation high school program one credit in ethnic studies, including Mexican American studies and African American studies, as an alternative to world geography or world history that may fulfil one of the three required credits in social studies. The bill applies only to students entering the ninth grade during the 2022-2023 school year or a later school year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, September 1, 2021.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 1504 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 revises a provision that appeared in the original, requiring the proposed ethnic studies option for the foundation high school program to consist of at least one-half credit in Mexican American studies and at least one-half credit in African American studies, to instead require a one-credit option in ethnic studies, including Mexican American studies and African American studies.