

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2705
By: Stucky
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Founded in 1901, Texas Woman's University (TWU) is the largest public university in the nation primarily for women and currently has two health sciences centers in Dallas and Houston in addition to its main campus in Denton. Amid the state's workforce shortage in nursing and allied health fields, TWU programs have provided the state with a large number of health-related doctoral degrees. There have been calls to establish TWU as a university system and provide the framework for campuses in Dallas and Houston to become degree-granting institutions. That framework will allow independent campus leadership to focus on expanding enrollment and increasing the number of graduates through closer alignment with the workforce needs of the Dallas and Houston communities. H.B. 2705 seeks to address these calls by establishing the Texas Woman's University System with component institutions in Dallas and Houston.

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

H.B. 2705 amends the Education Code to establish the Texas Woman's University System as a woman-focused system composed of Texas Woman's University, Texas Woman's University at Dallas, and Texas Woman's University at Houston. The bill requires the board of regents of the university system to appoint a chief executive officer of the system to also serve as the president of Texas Woman's University and establishes that each of the component institutions is under the management and control of the system board. The bill classifies Texas Woman's University at Dallas and Texas Woman's University at Houston as general academic teaching institutions. The bill provides for the transition of the Texas Woman's University to the Texas Woman's University System, including providing for the annual amount of funds allocated to the university system under the equitable allocation formula to be allocated to its component institutions as determined by the system board.

H.B. 2705 provides for the following with regard to a municipality in which a component institution of the system is located:

- the concurrent jurisdiction of campus security personnel and municipal police officers;
- agreements between the system board and the municipality's governing body relating to assistance to municipal peace officers by system peace officers, including provisions establishing jurisdiction and certain immunity from liability under such agreements; and

- the delegation of parking regulation authority from the municipality to the system by contract.

These provisions expressly do not limit a municipality's police powers or law enforcement jurisdiction, render a system campus peace officer a municipal employee, entitle such a peace officer to compensation from the municipality, or restrict the power of the system under other law to enforce laws, ordinances, or rules regulating traffic or parking.

H.B. 2705 amends the Agriculture Code and Health and Safety Code to make conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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