

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 4361
By: Raney
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

To ensure that Texas continues to have a dynamic and competitive economy in decades to come, more needs to be done to expand employer-driven workforce development programs in growing industries such as information systems, manufacturing, and health care. One obstacle to employers successfully developing these programs is the current requirement that employers partner with an institution of higher education in whose service region or service area the business is located to offer the program. Although this requirement may be overridden by a higher education regional council (HERC), HERCs only meet once per year and are only composed of the leadership of local higher education institutions. H.B. 4361 seeks to address this issue and ensure businesses are able to establish workforce development programs in a timely manner by reducing unnecessary and burdensome barriers for this program.

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. 4361 amends the Education Code to authorize a public institution of higher education to enter into an agreement with an employer to provide a credit or noncredit off-campus workforce education or lower-division program to the institution's students at a site requested by the employer without the approval of a higher education regional council, regardless of whether the site at which the program would be offered is located within the institution's uniform state service region or, if the institution is a public junior college, within the junior college district's service area, if the following conditions are satisfied:

- the employer has solicited an agreement to offer the program at that site with another institution of higher education that offers the same or substantially equivalent coursework as that requested by the employer;
- the proposed site for the off-campus program is located within the applicable uniform state service region or junior college district service area; and
- the institution does not finalize an offer to enter into an agreement with the employer that meets the employer's specifications for the off-campus program within six weeks after the employer's initial written solicitation requesting the institution to offer the program.

The bill's provisions apply beginning with the 2021-2022 academic year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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