

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 1525
By: Creighton
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The governor's university research initiative, which is administered by the Texas Economic Development and Tourism Office, provides matching funds for public institutions of higher education seeking to recruit distinguished researchers in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine from across the world, including Nobel laureates or the recipients of an equivalent honor, as well as members of the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, or the National Academy of Medicine. Since the initiative's establishment in 2015, it has assisted five public universities in recruiting 19 distinguished researchers. However, there are concerns that the current eligibility requirements are defined too narrowly. S.B. 1525 seeks to address these concerns by providing public universities greater recruitment flexibility to attract talented mid-career researchers, thus helping to ensure that there is a pipeline of researchers who will remain in Texas for decades.

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 Economic Development and Tourism Office in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

S.B. 1525 amends Subchapter H, Chapter 62, Education Code, as added by Chapters 323 (S.B. 632) and 915 (H.B. 26), Acts of the 84th Legislature, Regular Session, 2015, to include provisions of Subchapter H, Chapter 62, Education Code, as added by Chapter 448 (H.B. 7), Acts of the 84th Legislature, Regular Session, 2015, relating to the governor's university research initiative advisory board.

S.B. 1525 requires the Texas Economic Development and Tourism Office (TEDTO) to consult with the commissioner of higher education in exercising its authority to adopt any rules TEDTO considers necessary to administer the governor's university research initiative. The bill requires the commissioner to recommend to TEDTO the types of national academic recognitions that are considered to be highly prestigious for purposes of determining which individuals or groups qualify as a distinguished researcher for purposes of the initiative. The bill revises the definition of "distinguished researcher" as follows:

- specifies that such a researcher who qualifies because of the researcher's status as a Nobel laureate or member of an applicable National Academy is an individual researcher; and

- includes in the definition an individual researcher or group of researchers who have attained another highly prestigious national academic recognition, as defined by TEDTO rule.

S.B. 1525 repeals Subchapter H, Chapter 62, Education Code, as added by Chapter 448 (H.B. 7), Acts of the 84th Legislature, Regular Session, 2015.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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