

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 810
By: Kolkhorst
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Since 2009, state law has required public institutions of higher education to make undergraduate course syllabi and certain other course information available online to the public. Access to this information can be beneficial to current and potential students looking to evaluate courses prior to enrollment. However, some institutions are not in compliance with the law. S.B. 810 seeks to ensure accountability by requiring the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to post information showing which institutions are in compliance and which are not. The bill also seeks to improve the accessibility of the course information and to make information available for graduate courses as well.

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

S.B. 810 amends the Education Code to revise the requirement for each public institution of higher education, other than a medical and dental unit, to make available to the public on the institution's website for each undergraduate classroom course offered for credit by the institution a syllabus, instructor curriculum vitae, and, if available, a departmental budget report as follows:

- by extending the requirement to all classroom courses, including graduate courses, offered for credit by the institution;
- by changing the requirement that the information be accessible from the institution's website home page by use of not more than three links to a requirement that it be accessible from the home page; and
- by requiring the information to be clearly labeled as "public course and syllabus information."

S.B. 810 includes the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) among the recipients of the biennial report that each institution of higher education is required to submit regarding the institution's compliance with the course information posting requirements. The bill requires the THECB to monitor each institution to determine whether the institution is in substantial compliance with those posting requirements and to make available to the public on the THECB website the following information:

- a list indicating whether each institution is in substantial compliance; and
- a copy of each report submitted to the THECB.

Implementation of this requirement by the THECB is mandatory only if a specific appropriation is made for that purpose. The bill specifically grants the THECB authority to adopt rules to ensure substantial compliance with the posting requirements.

S.B. 810 applies beginning with the 2022 spring semester.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.