

SUBJECT: Interim study on data collection of technology research

COMMITTEE: Technology, Economic Development and Workforce — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 8 ayes — Strama, Parker, F. Brown, Button, Eissler, Gattis, Harless, Rodriguez
0 nays
1 absent — Ritter

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, May 5 — 29-0

WITNESSES: (*On House companion bill, HB 4329:*)
For — None
Against — None
On — Theresa Maldonado, Texas A&M University

DIGEST: CSSB 1600 would establish a select interim committee to study the feasibility of collecting data and maintaining a searchable electronic database to track specialized technology research projects conducted by public universities, public university research facilities, and other state institutions. The database would facilitate coordination among universities and facilities to improve access to and awareness of specialized research and technologies being developed. The committee would have to issue its findings and recommendations to the governor and the Legislature by December 1, 2010.

The committee would include representatives from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the University of Texas System, Texas A&M University System, Texas Tech University System, University of Houston System, and University of North Texas System.

The study would consider appropriate entities able to administer the data collection, the extent of legislative oversight required of the entity,

compliance with state and federal laws on access to public information, and the information the data collection would include.

In considering the information to be included, the study could consider a list of projects involving energy research, including methods of creation, storage, distribution, and conservation of energy; biomedical science research, including research that involved stem cells or human cloning; nanotechnology research, including nanomedicine; or other specialized technology research.

The study would have to include for each project listed a brief description, including field of technology and the entity involved with the projects, as well as other relevant information and available resources in the state related to specialized technology research. This could include expert faculty or research personnel, available technology and patents obtained, the location and policies for the use of available research equipment, public grants or contracts awarded, and the process through which any stem cells and stem cell lines utilized were derived.

The study would have to examine the current state of access to public information about specialized technology research projects and would have to assess methods of facilitating access to information. It would consider what information should be accessible to the public and what information, if any, should have restricted access.

The committee would be abolished on January 16, 2011.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2009.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

A comprehensive database on technology research such as CSSB 1600 proposes to study would promote collaboration and cooperation among Texas public institutions in the research and development sector. If the study recommendations included creating such a database, this would increase the national visibility of current research and grant awards at Texas universities. It would consolidate valuable information, enabling researchers, potential investors, collaborators, and students to access quickly crucial data in multiple disciplines. It would enable Texas universities to share information about research projects, grants, and

publications so that the state could maintain its position as a leader in research and development.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

The proposed legislation should include private higher education institutions and health-related institutions. These institutions also engage in extensive research endeavors. Including them would present a more complete picture of research efforts in Texas.

NOTES:

The House committee substitute differs from the Senate-passed version by specifying that the select interim committee would be composed of representatives from certain university systems rather than representatives from institutions.

The House companion bill, HB 4329 by Strama, was placed on the May 11 General State Calendar, but no further action was taken.