

- SUBJECT:** Establishing the Texas WORKS internship program
- COMMITTEE:** Higher Education — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Lozano, Raney, Alonzo, Alvarado, Button, Clardy, Howard, Morrison, Turner
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Ray Sullivan, Amazon.com; Miranda Goodsheller, Texas Association of Business; Justin Yancy, Texas Business Leadership Council; Yannis Banks, Texas NAACP)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Charles Puls, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board)
- BACKGROUND:** Concerned parties note that providing additional work-study opportunities to students with financial need would help enable those students to attend public and private institutions of higher education.
- DIGEST:** HB 3179 would require the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to establish the Texas Working Off Campus: Reinforcing Knowledge and Skills (WORKS) Internship Program to provide part-time jobs funded in part by the state to eligible students with financial need who were attending certain institutions of higher education. Under the program, employers would pay students participating in the program a wage set by THECB and would then be reimbursed by THECB for eligible wages.
- Funding.** THECB could use funds appropriated for the Texas college work-study program and the Texas WORKS Internship Program to establish an online portal to assist students and employers participating in the program. Those funds also could be used to cover the expenses and personnel costs of administering and assessing the program.

If funding for the program was insufficient to cover the cost of all eligible students, priority would be based on the order of application, as determined by THECB rules, and any other priority criteria established by THECB rules.

The bill would prohibit state support for the Texas WORKS program from exceeding the amount specified by appropriation.

Eligibility. Any public or private institution of higher education would be eligible for the program.

The bill would require a student participating in the program to be a Texas resident, enrolled full-time in an undergraduate certificate or degree program with an established financial need who met other eligibility criteria and requirements established by THECB. Students receiving an athletic scholarship, enrolled in seminary or similar programs, or those who had already received a bachelor's degree would not be eligible for the program.

The bill would require employers participating in the program to meet certain requirements, including that the employers be a private nonprofit entity, for-profit entity, or governmental entity other than an eligible institution or career school or college; use program positions only to supplement, rather than replace, normally filled positions; and provide the entirety of an employed student's wages and benefits.

Rules. THECB would adopt rules to implement the bill and ensure compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Online listing. THECB would be required to establish and maintain an online listing of Texas WORKS employment opportunities available to students accessible through a link appearing in a prominent place on THECB's website.

Effective date. This bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by

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a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2017, and would apply beginning with the fall 2017 semester.

NOTES: A companion bill, SB 1467 by West, was referred to the House Higher Education Committee on May 8.