

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.B. 713
By: Cuellar (Ellis)
Education
4/27/1999
Engrossed

DIGEST

A national study reviewed by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board showed that college participation and graduation rates decrease as family income decreases. In Texas, at least 46 percent of all households and 62 percent of African-American and Hispanic households have annual incomes of less than \$25,000. The rising cost of tuition, fees, and other expenses, such as room, board, books, and transportation, has made attending a Texas institution of higher education prohibitively expensive for many Texas students and their families. H.B. 713 would establish provisions regarding the Texas Gateway to the Future Grant Program and the Teach for Texas Program, by consolidating financial aid, grant, and scholarship programs, as well as providing for the education, certification, and recruitment of teachers.

PURPOSE

As proposed, H.B. 713 establishes provisions regarding the Texas Gateway to the Future Grant Program and the Teach for Texas Program, by consolidating financial aid, grant, and scholarship programs, as well as providing for the education, certification, and recruitment of teachers.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Sections 56.303(a) and (b), Education Code) and SECTION 12 (Section 61.0514, Education Code); and to the State Board for Educator Certification in SECTION 8 (Sections 21.503(a) and 21.504(c), Education Code), SECTION 11 (Section 21.0441, Education Code), and SECTION 12 (Section 61.0514, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 56, Education Code, by adding Subchapter M, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER M. TEXAS GATEWAY TO THE FUTURE GRANT PROGRAM

Sec. 56.301. DEFINITIONS. Defines “coordinating board,” “eligible institution,” private or independent institution of higher education,” “public junior college,” and “public technical institute.”

Sec. 56.302. PROGRAM NAME; PURPOSE. Provides that the student financial assistance program authorized by this subchapter is known as the Texas Gateway to the Future Grant Program (program), and an individual grant awarded is known as a Texas Gateway grant (grant). Establishes that the purpose of this subchapter is to provide a grant of money to enable eligible students to attend public and private institutions of higher education in this state.

Sec. 56.303. ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAM. Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to administer the program and to adopt any rules necessary to implement the program or subchapter. Requires THECB to consult with the student financial aid officers of eligible institutions in developing the rules. Requires THECB to adopt rules to provide a grant to an eligible student in the most efficient way possible. Prohibits the amount of a grant from exceeding the amount available for the program. Requires THECB to award grants to students who demonstrate the greatest financial need with the highest priority.

Sec. 56.304. INITIAL ELIGIBILITY FOR GRANT. Sets forth initial grant eligibility requirements for a person. Provides that a person with a baccalaureate degree is not eligible for

a grant. Prohibits a person from receiving a grant for more than 150 semester credit hours or the equivalent. Authorizes a person to complete the advanced high school curriculum requirements using certain methods. Provides that the requirement that a person complete the recommended or advanced high school curriculum or its equivalent does not apply to certain persons. Requires the commissioner of education (commissioner) to certify to THECB a list of all of the public high schools that do not offer all the necessary courses to complete all parts of the recommended or advanced curriculum or its equivalent.

Sec. 56.305. CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS. Authorizes a person to continue to receive a grant during each semester or term in which the person is enrolled, after initially qualifying, only if the person continues to meet certain requirements. Prohibits the person from receiving a grant, if the person fails to meet any of the requirements, during the next semester or term in which the person enrolls. Authorizes a person to become eligible to receive a grant in a subsequent semester or term if certain requirements are fulfilled. Establishes continued eligibility for a person who receives an undergraduate certificate or associate degree and enrolls in a higher-level undergraduate degree program, providing certain conditions are met. Sets forth conditions by which a person makes satisfactory academic progress toward an undergraduate degree or certificate.

Sec. 36.306. GRANT USE. Authorizes a person receiving a grant to use the money to pay certain standard costs incurred by a student. Authorizes an institution to disburse all or part of the proceeds of a grant to an eligible person only if all tuition and required fees owed by the person to the institution have been paid.

Sec. 36.307. GRANT AMOUNT. Sets forth the grant amount awarded to a student for a semester or term for a person enrolled full-time at an eligible institution, a private or independent institution of higher education, public technical institute, or public junior college. Provides that a student enrolled part-time at an eligible institution is entitled to a pro rata share of the average statewide amount of tuition and fees. Prohibits the amount of a grant from being reduced by any gift aid for which the person is eligible, with an exception. Requires THECB, not later than January 1 of each year, to publish the amounts of each grant for each type of institution established for the next academic year.

Sec. 56.308. NOTIFICATION OF PROGRAM; RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS. Requires THECB to distribute to each eligible institution and to each school district a copy of the rules. Sets forth requirements for each school district. Requires a student's transcript to indicate certain information not later than the end of the student's junior year.

Sec. 56.309. FUNDING. Authorizes THECB to solicit and accept gifts and grants from any public or private source.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 54.5021(c), Education Code, to authorize the amount allocated under this subsection to be used only for making grants under Chapter 56M. Deletes text regarding scholarship awards to needy and deserving students.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 56.039, Education Code, to require THECB to use transferred funds to award grants under Subchapter M. Deletes text regarding scholarships for students at institutions other than the institution that transferred the funds.

SECTION 4. Amends Chapter 61C, Education Code, by adding Section 61.0776, as follows:

Sec. 61.0776. CENTER FOR FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION. Requires THECB and the Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation (loan corporation), in conjunction with certain other agencies and individuals, to develop a center for financial aid information. Requires the center to disseminate information about financial aid opportunities and procedures. Requires the agencies, to assist THECB and the loan corporation in developing information provided by the center, to jointly create an advisory committee that consists of certain specific individuals. Authorizes the agencies to designate an institution of higher education or other entity with appropriate facilities and resources to operate or house the center. Requires the center to maintain a toll-free telephone line that is staffed by persons knowledgeable about financial aid information in this state. Requires the center, based on the advisory committee's recommendations, to publish information concerning

financial aid opportunities in the state and to fulfill certain conditions.

SECTION 5. Amends Section 11.252(a), Education Code, to set forth required provisions for a district improvement plan, including strategies for providing certain information to middle school, junior high school, and high school students regarding aspects of higher education. Makes conforming changes.

SECTION 6. Amends Section 21.451(a), Education Code, to require the minimum standards with respect to staff development to include guidelines for the cooperation of principals, counselors, and teachers to provide students and those students' parents with information about higher education. Sets forth requirements for the inclusion of certain necessary information in the staff development regarding certain aspects of higher education.

SECTION 7. Amends Section 28.002, Education Code, by adding Subsection (l), to authorize a school district to offer courses required for the completion of the recommended or advanced curriculum by distance learning methods. Prohibits a school district from offering more than 10 percent of those courses.

SECTION 8. Amends Chapter 21, Education Code, by adding Subchapter K, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER K. TEACH FOR TEXAS PROGRAM

Sec. 21.501. PURPOSES. Sets forth the purposes of the Teach for Texas Program.

Sec. 21.502. DEFINITIONS. Defines "board" and "program."

Sec. 21.503. DEVELOPMENT AND STRUCTURE OF PROGRAM; CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS. Requires the State Board for Educator Certification (certification board) to propose rules establishing the Teach for Texas Program (teaching program). Provides that the teaching program consists of a two tier program. Sets forth requirements by which the teaching board shall propose alternative certification.

Sec. 21.504. FINANCIAL INCENTIVES. Requires the program to offer to participants certain financial incentives. Sets forth conditions by which the certification board shall offer financial incentives. Provides that financial incentives are payable from funds appropriated for that purpose and from gifts, grants, and donations solicited by the board for that purpose. Requires the certification board to propose rules establishing criteria for awarding financial incentives.

Sec. 21.505. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CAMPAIGN. Requires the certification board, in conjunction with other agencies, to conduct a coordinated campaign to educate professionals and students about the program. Requires the campaign to emphasize certain values.

SECTION 9. Amends Section 21.004, Education Code, to require the Texas Education Agency (TEA), certification board, and THECB to develop and implement programs to identify talented students and recruit those students and certain persons into the teaching profession. Requires TEA, certification board, and THECB to develop and widely distribute materials that emphasize the importance of the teaching profession and inform individuals of certain applicable programs. Requires THECB to encourage certain institutions to incorporate a one-semester credit hour course for the purpose of recruiting undergraduates into the teaching profession. Provides that a course under this section is not considered in determining the number of semester hours of education courses required. Requires the commissioner, in cooperation with the commissioner of higher education and the executive director of the State Board for Educator Certification, to annually identify the need for teachers in specific subject areas and geographic regions and among underrepresented groups. Requires the commissioner to give priority to developing and implementing recruitment programs to address those needs for TEA's discretionary funds. Sets forth requirements for TEA, the certification board, and THECB to encourage certain entities to develop and promote programs regarding teaching as a profession. Deletes text regarding technology required for the recruitment program; TEA cooperation in development and implementation of the recruitment program; consideration for efforts for existing programs in recruiting minorities into the teaching profession; and requiring the appointment of and meetings with teacher recruiting officers in regional education service centers. Makes conforming changes.

SECTION 10. Amends Section 21.044, Education Code, to delete text regarding requirements for an internship or induction year program.

SECTION 11. Amends Chapter 21B, Education Code, by adding Sections 21.0441 and 21.0442, as follows:

Sec. 21.0441. **INDUCTION FOR BEGINNING EDUCATORS.** Requires the certification board to propose rules establishing guidelines for the induction of beginning educators. Sets forth requirements for the guidelines.

Sec. 21.0442. **COOPERATION WITH TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD.** Requires the certification board to cooperate with and advise THECB in adoption by THECB of rules for educator preparation coursework guidelines.

SECTION 12. Amends Chapter 61C, Education Code, by adding Section 61.0514, as follows:

Sec. 61.0514. **INTEGRATED COURSEWORK.** Requires THECB, by rule, in cooperation with the certification board, to adopt certain educator preparation coursework guidelines required for certification.

SECTION 13. Amends Chapter 61M, Education Code, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER M. New heading: REPAYMENT OF CERTAIN TEACHER AND FACULTY EDUCATION LOANS

Sec. 61.701. **REPAYMENT AUTHORIZED.** Makes conforming changes.

Sec. 61.702. **ELIGIBILITY.** Sets forth provisions established by THECB by which a person is eligible to receive repayment assistance. Deletes text regarding repayment assistance on a pro rata basis. Makes conforming and nonsubstantive changes.

Sec. 61.703. **LIMITATION.** Prohibits a person from receiving repayment assistance grants for more than 10, rather than five, years. Makes a conforming change.

Sec. 61.704. **ELIGIBLE LOANS.** Makes conforming changes.

Sec. 61.705. **REPAYMENT.** Provides that the minimum amount of repayment assistance that may be received in one year by a person is 50 percent of the amount of principal and accrued interest that is due that year. Makes conforming changes.

Sec. 61.706. **ADVISORY COMMITTEES.** Makes a conforming change.

Sec. 61.707. **ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDS.** Makes a conforming change.

Sec. 61.708. **RULES.** Authorizes THECB to adopt necessary rules regarding the minimum and maximum amount of repayment assistance a person may receive in one year. Requires a copy of the rules to be distributed to certain entities including the personnel office at an institution of higher education. Makes conforming changes.

SECTION 14. Amends Section 151.423, Tax Code, to make conforming changes.

SECTION 15. Repealer: Section 54.216, Education Code (regarding the Texas New Horizons Scholarships).

SECTION 16. Repealer, effective June 1, 1999: Chapter 56F, Education Code (regarding the Texas educational opportunity grant program).

SECTION 17. Provides that any money appropriated to, collected for, or that exists in an account to support any program abolished under SECTION 15 or 16 is transferred to THECB for use in the Texas Gateway to the Future Grant Program.

SECTION 18. Requires THECB to review and study the laws relating to financial aid, grants, and scholarship programs or tuition and fee waivers or exemptions. Sets forth requirements and goals of the study. Requires THECB to report its activities and findings to certain government officials not later than

December 1, 2000.

SECTION 19. Authorizes a person receiving a scholarship under Section 54.216, Education Code, on the effective date of this Act, to continue to receive the scholarship until the person is no longer eligible for the scholarship as the section exists on January 1, 1999. Requires the costs to be covered by the program.

SECTION 20. Require THECB, in conjunction with the commissioner, to conduct a study relating to the performance of students at institutions of higher education as that performance relates to whether a student completed the recommended or advanced high school curriculum. Sets forth considerations THECB shall include in the study. Requires THECB to issue the final report to certain individuals and entities, not later than January 1, 2003. Authorizes THECB to issue preliminary reports related to the study at any time. Establishes that this section expires January 2, 2003.

SECTION 21. Requires THECB and the eligible institutions of higher education to award scholarships under the program beginning with the 1999 fall semester. Requires THECB to adopt the rules for awarding scholarships under the program not later than July 25, 1999.

SECTION 22. Requires the commissioner to certify to THECB a list of all of the public high schools that do not offer all the courses necessary to complete all parts of the recommended or advanced curriculum or its equivalent, not later than July 31, 1999.

SECTION 23. Requires THECB to adopt and distribute rules in accordance with Section 61.0514, Education Code, not later than August 15, 2000. Requires public junior colleges and public senior colleges and universities to offer courses in accordance with those rules beginning with the fall semester of the 2002-2003 academic year.

SECTION 24. Emergency clause.
Effective date: upon passage.