

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 353
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Education
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DIGEST AND PURPOSE

Currently, there is a critical shortage of workers in the fields of electrical engineering and computer science. As proposed, S.B. 353 establishes the Texas Engineering and Technical Consortium, a public-private partnership to promote education in the electrical engineering and computer science-fields.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Section 51.505, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 51J, Education Code, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER J. New heading: TECHNOLOGY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Sec. 51.501. PURPOSE. Sets forth legislative purpose. Replaces existing Section 51.501 (Purpose).

Sec. 51.502. DEFINITIONS. Defines “account,” “consortium,” “coordinating board,” “eligible computer science institution,” “eligible engineering institution,” and “general academic teaching institution.” Replaces existing Section 51.502 (Definitions)

Sec. 51.503. TEXAS ENGINEERING AND TECHNICAL CONSORTIUM. Authorizes eligible engineering institutions, eligible computer science institutions, and private technology companies to establish and administer the Texas Engineering and Technical Consortium as a resource-sharing program operated within an eligible institution to serve certain purposes. Requires the consortium to include at least one eligible engineering institution or eligible computer science institution. Requires each participant in the consortium to meet certain criteria. Authorizes the consortium, at the end of each two-year period or any other period determined by the consortium, to transfer its administrative functions to another eligible institution participating in the consortium. Replaces existing Section 51.503 (Engineering Excellence Fund).

Sec. 51.504. CONSORTIUM ADVISORY COMMITTEE. Requires the consortium to appoint an advisory committee to advise and make recommendations to the consortium regarding the operations and activities of the consortium. Requires the advisory committee to include a representative of each consortium participant. Provides that the advisory committee is subject to Chapter 2110 (State Agency Advisory Committees), Government Code. Replaces existing Section 51.504 (Determination of Critical Needs).

Sec. 51.505. GIFTS, GRANTS, AND DONATIONS; TECHNOLOGY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT. Authorizes the consortium to solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations of any kind and from any source, including foundations, corporations, and

institutions of higher education, for the purpose of implementing this subchapter. Requires the consortium to transfer money received, other than money retained to administer the consortium, to the comptroller for deposit to the credit of the technology workforce development account. Provides that the technology workforce development account is an account in the general revenue fund. Authorizes money in the account to be appropriated only for the purpose of awarding grants. Provides that the account consists of gifts, grants, and donations deposited to the credit of the account. Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (coordinating board) to administer the account and to adopt any rules necessary to administer the account. Replaces existing Section 51.505 (Distribution and Disbursement of Fund).

Sec. 51.506. **APPROPRIATIONS; STATE MATCHING PROGRAM.** Authorizes the legislature to appropriate money from the undedicated portion of the general revenue fund, in addition to money from the technology workforce development account, for the purpose of awarding grants. Prohibits the amount appropriated from the undedicated portion of the general revenue fund for a state fiscal biennium from being less than the sum of the amount of money deposited to the credit of the account during that biennium under Section 51.505; and the market value of any in-kind contributions accepted by the consortium during the biennium under Section 51.505, as determined by the comptroller based on information provided to the comptroller by the consortium and verified by the coordinating board. Provides that the legislature is not prohibited from appropriating an amount that exceeds the minimum matching amount. Replaces existing Section 51.506 (Excluded Gifts).

Sec. 51.507. **GRANT PROGRAM.** Requires the coordinating board to use money appropriated under Section 51.506 to award grants on a competitive, peer-review basis to eligible engineering institutions and eligible computer science institutions to increase engineering and computer science graduates, recruit students from certain groups or backgrounds, and provide certain opportunities. Requires the coordinating board, in awarding grants, to consider certain factors with respect to the electrical engineering or computer science program of each eligible institution.

Sec. 51.508. **COORDINATING BOARD ADVISORY COMMITTEE.** Requires the coordinating board to appoint an advisory committee consisting of 11 specified members with significant expertise in electrical engineering, computer science, or higher education. Replaces existing Section 51.508 (Excess Appropriation).

Sec. 51.509. **ANNUAL REPORTS.** Requires an eligible engineering or computer science institution that is awarded a grant to report to the coordinating board regarding the use of that grant not later than September 1 of each year. Requires the coordinating board, not later than October 31 of each year, to provide to the governor, the legislature, and the consortium participants a report consolidated from reports submitted to the coordinating board by eligible institutions. Replaces existing Section 51.509 (Use of Fund).

Sec. 51.510. **COMMITTEE TO EVALUATE GRANT PROGRAM; BIENNIAL REPORTS.** Requires the coordinating board to evaluate the effectiveness of the grant program by appointing an advisory committee consisting of certain members. Requires the grant program evaluation committee to report the results of its evaluation to the coordinating board not later than September 1 of each even-numbered year. Requires the coordinating board to report the results of the evaluation to the governor, the legislature, and the consortium participants not later than October 31 of each even-numbered year.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2001.