

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
78R6555 JSA-D

S.B. 1297
By: Ogden
Subcommittee on Higher Education
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As Filed

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's plan for higher education, *Closing the Gaps*, states that the number of students attending college in central Texas will increase by 50,000 in the next 10 to 12 years. Southwest Texas State University and The University of Texas at Austin are moving toward slowing their growth. Currently, the Round Rock Higher Education Center (RRHEC), which includes Southwest Texas State University, Austin Community College, and Temple College at Taylor, serves about 1,800 students and is expected to serve twice as many by 2005. RRHEC needs a permanent campus and the capacity to meet the expanding educational needs of one of the fastest growing areas of the state. Additionally, current Williamson County residents have to drive either to Austin or San Marcos to attend an institution of higher education. As proposed, S.B. 1297 authorizes the board of regents of the Texas State University System to issue revenue bonds, not to exceed \$27 million, to finance a multi-institutional facility in Williamson County.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 55B, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 55.1744, as follows:

Sec. 55.1744. SOUTHWEST TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY; ADDITIONAL BONDS.

(a) Authorizes the board of regents of the Texas State University System (board), in addition to the other authority granted by this subchapter, to issue bonds in accordance with this subchapter, in the aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$27 million, to finance the acquisition, purchase, construction, improvement, renovation, enlargement, or equipping of property or related infrastructure for a multi-institutional education center in Williamson County for Southwest Texas State University to offer educational programs, support activities, and provide facilities for other educational entities to further institutional efficiency and coordinate educational programs.

(b) Authorizes the board to pledge irrevocably, to the payment of those bonds, all or any part of the revenue of an institution, branch, or entity of the Texas State University System, including student tuition charges. Prohibits the amount of a pledge made under this subsection from being reduced or abrogated while the bonds for which the pledge is made, or bonds issued to refund those bonds, are outstanding.

(c) Authorizes the board to transfer funds among institutions, branches, and entities of the Texas State University System to ensure the most equitable and efficient allocation of available resources for each institution, branch, or entity to carry out its duties and purposes, if sufficient funds are not available to the board to meet its obligations under this section.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2003.