

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
79R394 KSD-D

S.B. 157
By: Fraser
S/C on Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

There were no public upper-level higher education opportunities within a one-hour drive of Bell County until the 75th Texas Legislature created the state's first university system center by enacting S.B. 572 in 1997. By the spring of 2004, Tarleton State University System Center (Tarleton-CT) enrolled 1,983 students--an increase of 56 percent since Tarleton-CT opened its doors in the fall of 1999. In the five years it has been open, Tarleton-CT has produced 2,006 graduates.

Tarleton-CT, located in Killeen, was the first university system center created by the state using the pathway model. This model is designed to provide higher education opportunities in fast-growing geographical areas where opportunities for post secondary education are not readily available. The Texas Education Code requires that Tarleton-CT enroll 2,500 full-time students in order to become a stand-alone institution.

While the relationship between Tarleton State University and Tarleton-CT has been beneficial to both institutions, many people in the Bell County community believe that Tarleton-CT (Texas A&M University-Central Texas) has a better chance of succeeding and growing as stand-alone institution.

S.B. 157 expedites the opening of Texas A&M University-Central Texas by lowering the threshold to 1,000 full-time students (FTEs), similar to that required for the University of North Texas-Dallas.

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 Section 87.861(d), Education Code, to prohibit Texas A&M University--Central Texas from operating as a general academic teaching institution until the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board certifies that enrollment at the Tarleton State University System Center--Central Texas in Killeen has reached an enrollment equivalent of 1,000, rather than 2,500, full-time students for the semester.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2005.