

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
80R2200 KSD-D

H.B. 317
By: Miller et al. (Fraser)
S/C on Higher Education
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Tarleton State University System Center--Central Texas (Tarleton--CT) opened its doors in the fall of 1999. Currently, all available space is fully utilized and options for responding to increased demand are very limited.

In its December 2006 "Regional Plan for Higher Education, Summary of Needs in Central Texas," the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board recognized the need to accommodate enrollment increases in Central Texas. A wide variety of programs from the certificate to professional level are offered in the Central Texas region, which includes The University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University in College Station. However, due to the statewide mission and self-imposed enrollment limits at these two schools, the report states that "Tarleton State University--Central Texas University System Center in Killeen could help accommodate expanding demand."

Additionally, the United States Congress provided for conveyance of approximately 700 acres of land to The Texas A&M University System for the purpose of establishing Texas A&M University--Central Texas, which will be established from existing Taleton--CT, once the appropriate student threshold is met. Fort Hood, the largest military base in the world, supported the effort to convey part of its base, because the leadership from Fort Hood believes in providing soldiers and their families access to public higher-education opportunities.

Tuition revenue bonds in the amount of \$25 million were authorized for Texas A&M University--Central Texas during the 3rd Called Session of the 79th Legislature. However, the school is not eligible to receive the bonds until it reaches an enrollment equivalent of 1,500 full-time students for one semester.

Currently, Tarleton--CT is renting and/or borrowing classroom space from the local independent school district and the community college. Due to these other institutions having priority over the facilities, 80 percent of the classes must be scheduled after 4:00 p.m. Students are at a disadvantage at earning their degrees because classes are not all offered at one facility.

H.B. 317 authorizes The Texas A&M University System to issue the previously authorized revenue bonds when the institution reaches 1,000 full-time students for one semester. The changes to the issuance requirements coincide with stand-alone provisions in current law, and hasten the funding mechanism necessary to construct a building to house the institution's administration and instruction functions.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

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

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 55.1751(d), Education Code, as follows:

- (d) Prohibits The Texas A&M University System (TAMU), notwithstanding Subsection (a), from issuing bonds under this section for facilities at TAMU--Central Texas until the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board certifies that enrollment at TAMU--Central

Texas has reached an enrollment equivalent of 1,000 full-time students, rather 1,500 full-time students, for one semester.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2007.