

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1400
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S/C on Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The nearest public law school to South Texas is the University of Houston in Houston, and the nearest private law school is St. Mary's University School of Law in San Antonio. It is extremely difficult for a resident of the South Texas region who wishes to pursue a legal education to leave their family and work to relocate outside of the region for three years to pursue a legal education.

There is a need for lawyers in the South Texas region to address the growing population and growing legal needs of the area. In 2002, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board reported that the Rio Grande Valley was the region of the state with the greatest need for more lawyers.

As proposed, S.B. 1400 establishes the first public law school in South Texas at The University of Texas at Brownsville.

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 Chapter 78, Education Code, by adding Section 78.11, as follows:

Sec. 78.11. UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT BROWNSVILLE SCHOOL OF LAW. Requires the board of regents of The University of Texas System (board) to establish and maintain The University of Texas at Brownsville School of Law as a professional school of the university.

(b) Authorizes the board to prescribe courses leading to customary degrees offered at other leading American schools of law and authorizes the board to award those degrees.

(c) Requires the school of law to be located in Cameron County.

SECTION 2. Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to prepare a feasibility study to assist the board in establishing a law school as provided by this Act not later than December 1, 2007.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2007.