

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.S.B. 2405
By: Zaffirini
Agriculture & Rural Affairs
5/4/2009
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Many rural areas suffer from lack of a skilled workforce to maintain local industries. At the same time, students in rural school districts often have limited access to workforce education or certification.

There is no current law that establishes a workforce investment program specifically designed to target rural areas. This bill would create a rural workforce investment pilot program under the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA).

C.S.S.B. 2405 relates to a pilot program to expand access to career and technical education partnerships in rural areas.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the commissioner of agriculture in SECTION 1 (Section 12.0271, Agriculture Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 12, Agriculture Code, by adding Section 12.0271, as follows:

Sec. 12.0271. RURAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT PILOT PROGRAM. (a) Defines "general academic teaching institution," "public junior college," "public technical institute," and "rural area."

(b) Requires the commissioner of agriculture (commissioner) by rule, subject to available funding, to develop a rural workforce investment pilot program to issue grants for developing partnerships in rural areas among school districts, public junior colleges, public technical institutes, general academic teaching institutions, and business and industry to provide greater access to career and technical education and industry certification to high school students in those areas.

(c) Prohibits the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) from issuing more than four grants under this section in each state fiscal biennium.

(d) Requires TDA to coordinate with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, and the Texas Education Agency in developing the pilot program.

(e) Authorizes students participating in the pilot program to receive at least 60 hours of college credit before high school graduation.

(f) Authorizes a local workforce development board authorized by TWC to apply to participate in the pilot program if the workforce development board serves a rural area of the state and meets any other qualifications prescribed by the commissioner.

(g) Requires an applicant, to receive a grant under this section, to commit public or private funds matching the grant in a percentage set by the commissioner. Requires the commissioner to set the required percentage of matching funds based

on the demonstrated economic capacity of the community served by the program to raise funds for the purpose of matching the grant, as determined by the commissioner.

SECTION 2. Provides that this Act does not make an appropriation. Provides that a provision in this Act that creates a new governmental program, creates a new entitlement, or imposes a new duty on a governmental entity is not mandatory during a fiscal period for which the legislature has not made a specific appropriation to implement the provision.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.