

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1525
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Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Student organization members at institutions of higher education often are eager to assist students with disabilities but do not know how to provide accommodations. Student organization members also may not know who to contact or where to obtain assistance regarding how to make information and services accessible for students with disabilities.

Current law does not require content regarding issues affecting students with disabilities to be included during required student organization training. The proposed legislation will add a disability awareness component to the risk management training programs already required of student organizations and staff advisors of student organizations.

The Texas Education Code requires that risk management programs for members and advisors of student organizations at institutions of higher education to address possession of alcoholic beverages and illegal drugs, including penalties that may be imposed for possession or use; hazing; sexual abuse or harassment; fire and other safety issues, including the possession and use of a firearm or other weapon or explosive device; travel to a destination outside the area in which the institution is located; behavior at parties or other events held by a student organization; and adoption of a risk management policy. Under the proposed legislation, student organization members and staff advisors will also be trained regarding issues affecting persons with disabilities, including the review of applicable requirements of state and federal law, any related policies of an institution for providing reasonable accommodations, and modifications to address the needs of students with disabilities, including access to student organization activities.

As proposed, S.B. 1525 amends current law relating to including disability awareness training in risk management programs required for members and advisors of student organizations at postsecondary educational institutions.

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 51.9361(g), Education Code, to authorize a risk management program for members and advisors of student organizations under this section (Risk Management Programs For Members and Advisors of Student Organizations) to address any issue determined appropriate by the postsecondary educational institution and to require the program to address issues regarding persons with disabilities, including a review of applicable requirements of federal and state law, and any related policies of the institution, for providing reasonable accommodations and modifications to address the needs of students with disabilities, including access to the activities of the student organization.

SECTION 2. Provides that the change in law made by this Act to Section 51.9361(g), Education Code, applies beginning with a risk management program provided at a public or private postsecondary educational institution for the 2013-2014 academic year.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2013.