

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center

H.B. 655  
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Higher Education  
7/28/2017  
Enrolled

### **AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Texas has the highest percentage of college students completing their degrees at four-year institutions of higher education (IHEs) who previously enrolled at two-year IHEs. In 2016, Texas taxpayers, students, and families spent nearly \$120 million on excess credits. By requiring students to declare a major or meta major by the time they attain a certain amount of credit hour completion, students would stay on track for higher completion rates at two-year IHEs and would better plan the courses needed to efficiently and successfully transfer to four-year IHEs.

H.B. 655 directs community college students to select a pathway through a major or meta major not later than after having completed 30 semester credit hours. This would encourage students to select an educational pathway early and incentivize colleges and universities to work more collaboratively to improve credit mobility. Accordingly, H.B. 655 would help Texas achieve its 60x30 plan goal of having 60 percent of 25 to 34 year olds having a certificate or degree by 2030.

H.B. 655 amends current law relating to the filing of a degree plan by students at public junior colleges.

### **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 51.9685(a)(2), Education Code, to define "public junior college" and make nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 51.9685, Education Code, by adding Subsection (c-1), as follows:

(c-1) Requires a student enrolled in an associate or bachelor's degree program at a public junior college, notwithstanding Subsections (b) (relating to students of an institution of higher education (IHE) filing a degree plan with the IHE by a certain time) and (c) (relating to certain students filing a degree plan with their IHE not later than the end of the student's second regular semester or term at the IHE), to file a degree plan with the college not later than:

- (1) the end of the second regular semester or term immediately following the semester or term in which the student earned a cumulative total of 30 or more semester credit hours of course credit for courses described by Subsection (b); or
- (2) if the student begins the student's first semester or term at the college with 30 or more semester credit hours of course credit for courses described by Subsection (b), the end of the student's second regular semester or term at the college.

SECTION 3. Provides that Section 51.9685(c-1), Education Code, as added by this Act, applies beginning with students who initially enroll in a public junior college for the 2018 fall semester.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2017.