

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
87R5788 KJE-D

S.B. 810
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Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

H.B. 2504, passed in 2009, required each institution of higher education to make course syllabi information accessible to the public through each institution's website. The bill required each institution to have the syllabi information accessible within three links of the institution's website home page and searchable by keywords. Requiring higher education institutions to post course information online ensures the continuous availability of vital course information. It also provides current and potential students convenient access to course syllabi so they may evaluate courses prior to enrollment. A recent review of several higher education institution websites indicate that many institutions are not in compliance with ensuring that course syllabi information is accessible.

In an effort to improve and enhance higher education institutions' compliance with the requirements of H.B. 2504, S.B. 810 requires each university's compliance report to be provided to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and posted on THECB's website. The bill also expands syllabi public access requirements to graduate courses and improves the accessibility of this information by enabling the course syllabi information to be easily searchable and accessible on the institution's website home page.

Lastly, the bill grants authority for the Comptroller of Public Accounts of the State of Texas to withhold funds of higher education institutions that are out of compliance with the provisions of S.B. 810.

As proposed, S.B. 810 amends current law relating to the course information required to be posted on a public institution of higher education's Internet website.

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 51.974, Education Code, by amending Subsections (a), (b), and (f) and adding Subsections (f-1) and (f-2), as follows:

(a) Requires each institution of higher education, other than a medical and dental unit, as defined by Section 61.003 (Definitions), to make available to the public on the institution's Internet website certain information for each course, rather than for each undergraduate classroom course, offered for credit by the institution.

(b) Requires that the information required by Subsection (a) meet certain criteria, including that it be accessible from the institution's Internet website homepage, rather than accessible by use of not more than three links, and clearly labeled as "public course and syllabus information." Makes nonsubstantive changes.

(f) Includes the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) among the entities to whom each institution of higher education, not later than January 1 of each odd-numbered year, is required to submit a written report regarding the institution's

compliance with Section 51.974 (Internet Access to Course Information). Makes a nonsubstantive change.

(f-1) Requires THECB to monitor each institution of higher education's compliance with this section and make available to the public on THECB's Internet website:

(1) a list indicating each institution of higher education's compliance or noncompliance with this section; and

(2) a copy of each report submitted to THECB under Subsection (f).

(f-2) Requires THECB, not later than July 1 of each year, to notify the Comptroller of Public Accounts of the State of Texas (comptroller) of each institution of higher education that fails to comply with the requirements under Subsection (a) or (b). Requires the comptroller, for each institution for which that notice is received, for each state fiscal year beginning after receipt, to withhold one percent of the total amount of general revenue funds appropriated directly to the institution for that fiscal year until THECB notifies the comptroller that the institution is in compliance with the requirements under Subsections (a) and (b).

SECTION 2. Provides that Section 51.974, Education Code, as amended by this Act, applies beginning with the 2022 spring semester.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2021.