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“LSG Analysis and Recommendations on the State of Higher Education in Texas”

The Legislative Study Group has long been a vocal proponent for the establishment of new Tier 1 universities and additional opportunities for academic excellence in Texas. In the 2008 report *LSG Analysis and Recommendations on the State of Higher Education in Texas*, the LSG wrote: “As the state with the second highest population total in the nation, there are only two tier one universities in Texas. California has 10 tier one universities, New York has eight, Massachusetts five and Illinois four. Proportionally, Texas should have six to seven total top tier universities to maintain competitiveness...**Top tier university development in the state of Texas is necessary to provide adequate supply to meet the demands of the growing population.**”

This report received accolades from multiple news sources including a Dallas Morning News editorial entitled *Caucus Right to Push Top Tier Universities*. The article highlighted the forward-thinking approach of the LSG saying, the “higher-ed report declared another vital goal: building more Tier One universities in Texas. In doing so, the House’s Legislative Study Group became the first panel of lawmakers to propose an approach for next year’s lawmaking session.”

Establishing a potential Tier 1 university in South Texas would decrease the burden on UT- Austin and TAMU by offering students the option to attend competitive schools that are geographically closer to home. HB 1000 is a great start, and we must remember that there are more regions of our great state to cover.

LSG Floor Report For General State Calendar – Tuesday, March 19, 2013

Bill	Caption	Committee	Analysis & Evaluation	Recommendation
HB 1000 by Rep. Oliveira, Branch, Canales, Guerra, Longoria	Relating to the creation of a new university in South Texas within The University of Texas System. <i>Companion bill SB 24 received from Senate on 3/14/13. HB 1000 eligible to be laid on the table subject to call. This report applies to both bills.</i>	Higher Education	<p>HB 1000 creates a new “super university” in South Texas by merging the students, faculty and assets of UT-Pan American, UT-Brownsville, and the Regional Academic Health Center under the governance, management, and control of the Board of Regents of the University of Texas System. The new university will be eligible for more funding dollars to increase academic viability.</p> <p>In order for the new university to be eligible to participate in the Permanent University Fund (PUF), HB 1000 must receive a two-thirds vote from both the House and the Senate. Participating in this fund will allow the new university to begin the process of achieving tier-one status. Increasing profits from oil and gas rich lands will allow for participation without reducing funding from other PUF eligible institutions. The new university will become eligible for additional funding opportunities, such as UTRIP (matching funds from local entities), National Research funds and state faculty retention dollars. These universities are currently too small to be eligible for these funds on their own. In 2009, the Legislature passed a framework to assist Texas universities in achieving tier-one status. Those changes will allow this new university to be eligible for “emerging research university” status, giving them the ability to compete for matching dollars for their fundraising, research expenditures, academic achievement and graduate degree attainment.</p> <p>HB 1000 will have a significant economic impact to the region. The merger will create 7-10 thousand new jobs with an average salary of \$63,000, reduce the unemployment rate of the Lower Rio Grande Valley and improve access to higher education and healthcare.</p>	Favorable Evaluated by: Torey Ian Powell 512-763-0031 torey@texaslsg.org

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			<p>Merging the institutions will reduce redundancy, resulting in increased spending on research and new programs.</p> <p>HB 1000 will provide much need medical relief to the South Texas region by creating a state-of-the-art 21st century medical school. The current Regional Academic Health center will become a regional Medical University serving the needs of the Lower Rio Grande Valley and reducing the shortage of physicians and medical personnel in Texas. According to the US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in a letter to Gov. Perry, the region has “only 124 doctors for every 100,000 residents, far behind the state average of 165 doctors and little more than half the national average of 240 doctors per 100,000 residents.”</p> <p>HB 1000 will require additional appropriations over the next ten years to ensure South Texas becomes a hub for medical and academic achievement. Larger state funding will allow for leveraging federal funding and additional resources to gain academic capital. The UT System has committed over \$100 million for the next 10 years, but an additional \$10 million over current appropriations will be needed to fully accomplish this goal. There is no current fiscal note for the bill, but as the medical school becomes operational state formula funding will be realized.</p>	
Bill	Caption	Committee	Analysis & Evaluation	Recommendation
<p>HB 1263 By Rep. Lewis</p>	<p>Relating to the delay in the implementation of the abolishment of small claims courts.</p>	<p>Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence</p>	<p>In 2011, HB 79 abolished small claims courts and required Justices of the Peace to be trained in substantive procedural and evidentiary law matters by May 1, 2013. It also required specialized legal education to be provided in this timeline by Texas Justice Court Training Centers to Texas Justices of Peace in order to transfer all small claims courts proceedings into Justice Courts. HB 1263 extends this deadline to August 31, 2013, because the timeline as it currently stands is considered too short to fulfill the obligations set forth in 2011. The New Rules will not be promulgated until mid-April, which would only give the Justice Courts two weeks to implement them on May 1, 2013. Extending the deadline by four months allows necessary time for the Texas Supreme Court to streamline the jurisdictional level of courts as required by statute.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Yvonne Okonkwo 512-763-0031 Yvonne@texaslsg.org</p>

