



April 13, 2023

To: Senate Higher Education Subcommittee

Re: Written Testimony Submitted FOR SB 1887

Honorable Chairman Creighton and Members of the Senate Higher Education Subcommittee,

On behalf of The Education Trust and the thirteen undersigned Texas organizations, my name is Jonathan Feinstein testifying in support of Senate Bill 1887. Thank you to Senator West for bringing forward this legislation and continuing to put students first when it comes to transfer success. I also want to thank the committee for its support of transformational community college finance reform this session. SB 1887 serves as a perfect complement as Texas shifts to a more dynamic, outcomes-based formula that rewards degree completion, transfer success, and dual credit that applies toward postsecondary credentials.

For the past 13 months, Ed Trust and our partners have worked alongside a Student Advisory Council comprised of more than a dozen current and recent community college students from across Texas. As this group of student leaders engaged in the work of the Commission on Community College Finance, they prioritized credit transfer as a key barrier to student success. Attached is a short brief that features students' own research and recommendations.

I'd like to highlight a few of their points to illustrate why SB 1887 is so necessary:

- About 31% of Texas community college students transfer to four-year institutions within six years. This represents more than 82,000 students, yet only 42% of these students earn a Bachelor's degree compared to 47% nationally.¹ Compared to an associate degree, a Bachelor's degree more than doubles a student's chances of earning at least \$50,000 per year.²
- Roughly 17,000 students failed to transfer a combined 70,000 courses to Texas public universities in Fall 2020; and 5,500 of these students failed to transfer 5 or more courses, a full semester's worth of coursework, delaying and even preventing credential completion.³
- Wasted transfer credits cost Texas an estimated \$350 million every year, \$227 million to students and another \$123 million to the state.⁴

Recognizing that community colleges cannot solve transfer challenges alone, members of the Student Advisory Council have advocated for wider adoption and implementation of the Field of Study curricula developed under the Texas Transfer Framework. The "Texas Direct" associate degree proposed in this bill reflects years of hard work and collaboration between our 2-year and 4-year institutions to operate in the best interest of students. If implemented with everyone playing by the same rules, the "Texas Direct" degree would move us toward a future in which students at every college in the state have the freedom to reach their career goals faster and more affordably.

This bill helps ensure that all Texas higher education institutions communicate and cooperate while respecting their autonomy to define unique course offerings. It also furthers the transparency needed to resolve transfer challenges and, in so doing, save Texas students and taxpayers valuable time and money while building a Talent Strong Texas.

¹ <https://www.edtx.org/getattachment/dfff1f1a-ec91-4463-bfbb-4d8e1ec85ae8/GetFile.asp>

² <https://reportcenter.highered.texas.gov/meeting/advisory-committee-supporting-documents/txcccf-presentation-todd-williams-dec-13-2021/>

³ <https://texas2036.org/posts/improving-credit-transfer-in-texas-colleges-and-universities/>

⁴ https://tacc.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/transfer_efficiency_report.pdf

Thank you for your time, and again to Senator West for this bill. We urge your favorable consideration.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Feinstein
Texas State Director, The Education Trust

Supporting Organizations

