



April 8, 2025

To: House Higher Education Committee

Re: Public testimony FOR HB 4909

Good afternoon Chairman Wilson, Vice Chair Howard and Members,

My name is Kelle Kieschnick and I am the Vice President of Policy at the Texas Business Leadership Council testifying in support of the Committee Sub to House Bill 4909. We are a non-partisan, statewide network of business leaders advancing policies to support a more globally competitive Texas.

We currently have a skills gap due to low postsecondary attainment that is putting a strain on our workforce. Less than 25% of students earn a postsecondary credential by the age of 24 and less than half of high school graduates enroll in a postsecondary program yet it is estimated that over 60% of Texas jobs will require a credential beyond high school by 2031.¹ That's not good enough to support our Texas economy and it is critical that we make every effort to support more students in pursuing postsecondary opportunities and this starts in our K-12 system.

House Bill 4909 provides a **critical tool to help streamline the college admissions process and reduce barriers to entry**, particularly for first-generation students. The MyTexasFuture online platform will serve as a centralized hub for students to utilize the common application and it **facilitates the Direct Admissions program to proactively provide students with information about institutions where they meet admission criteria**. This greatly simplifies the application process and increases transparency by providing students, parents and advisors a fuller picture of the opportunities available to a student after high school. The bill requires notification to students and families to build awareness about this tool and the direct admissions process.

As well as the application process, **MyTexasFuture will serve as a one-stop shop for students and parents to research postsecondary opportunities so they can make informed decisions** and supplement the support provided by high school advisors. The tool provides **data to assess the value of post-secondary credentials by program** and the ability to compare between institutions in terms of net cost of

¹ [Texas Talent Trajectory \(T3\)](#), 8th Grade Cohort Data: 2013 (2024); Carnevale, A.P et al. (2023), [After Everything: Projections of Jobs, Education, and Training Requirements through 2031](#), Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce.

obtaining the credential, median wages, student loan debt to income ratio and more.

We commend you, Chairman Wilson, for the steps that HB 4909 takes to simplify the college application process, promote higher education accessibility and empower students, parents and advisors with critical data. It will encourage greater participation in postsecondary education to better prepare for the workforce of the future and a more globally competitive Texas.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

Respectfully,

Kelle Kieschnick
Vice President of Policy
Texas Business Leadership Council
kkieschnick@txblc.org