

By: Watson

S.B. No. 2231

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the exemption of tuition and laboratory fees at public institutions of higher education for certain paramedics.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. The heading to Section 54.353, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 54.353. FIREFIGHTERS OR PARAMEDICS ENROLLED IN FIRE SCIENCE COURSES.

SECTION 2. Sections 54.353(a) and (f), Education Code, are amended to read as follows:

(a) The governing board of an institution of higher education shall exempt from the payment of tuition and laboratory fees any student enrolled in one or more courses offered as part of a fire science curriculum who:

(1) is employed as a firefighter or a paramedic by a political subdivision of this state; or

(2) is currently, and has been for at least one year, an active member of an organized volunteer fire department participating in the Texas Emergency Services Retirement System or a retirement system established under the Texas Local Fire Fighters Retirement Act (Article 6243e, Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes) and who holds:

(A) an Accredited Advanced level of certification, or an equivalent successor certification, under the

1 State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas volunteer
2 certification program; or

3 (B) Phase V (Firefighter II) certification, or an
4 equivalent successor certification, under the Texas Commission on
5 Fire Protection's voluntary certification program under Section
6 [419.071](#), Government Code.

7 (f) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall
8 adopt:

9 (1) rules governing the granting or denial of an
10 exemption under this section, including rules:

11 (A) prescribing the educational attainment or
12 level of certification necessary to qualify for an exemption as a
13 paramedic; and

14 (B) relating to the determination of a student's
15 eligibility for an exemption; and

16 (2) a uniform listing of degree programs covered by
17 the exemption under this section.

18 SECTION 3. (a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating
19 Board shall adopt the rules required by Section [54.353](#)(f),
20 Education Code, as amended by this Act, as soon as practicable after
21 the effective date of this Act.

22 (b) Section [54.353](#), Education Code, as amended by this Act,
23 applies beginning with tuition and laboratory fees charged for the
24 2019 fall semester. Tuition and laboratory fees charged for an
25 academic period before that semester are covered by the law in
26 effect immediately before the effective date of this Act, and the
27 former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

1 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
2 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
3 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
4 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
5 Act takes effect September 1, 2019.