

By: Thierry

H.B. No. 214

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to measures to assist students enrolled at public institutions of higher education who are homeless or who are or were in foster care.

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

SECTION 1. Section 51.9356, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 51.9356. DESIGNATION OF LIAISON OFFICER TO ASSIST STUDENTS WHO ARE OR WERE IN FOSTER CARE OR WHO ARE HOMELESS. (a) In this section:

(1) "Institution" ~~["institution"]~~ of higher education" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

(2) "Students who are homeless" has the meaning assigned to the term "homeless children and youths" under 42 U.S.C. Section 11434a and includes students who reside in a student housing facility maintained by an institution of higher education during an academic term but who are homeless between academic terms.

(b) Each institution of higher education shall designate at least one employee of the institution to act as a liaison officer for current and incoming:

(1) students ~~[at the institution]~~ who are or were ~~[formerly]~~ in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services; and

1           (2) students who are homeless.

2           (c) To the extent allowed by state or federal law, an ~~[the]~~  
3 institution of higher education shall identify ~~[those]~~ students  
4 described by Subsection (b) from information provided to the  
5 institution in admission or financial aid applications or other  
6 available resources.

7           (d) An institution of higher education may designate under  
8 Subsection (b) the same employee or employees to act as liaison  
9 officer for each student population described in that subsection or  
10 one or more different employees to act as liaison officer for each  
11 of those student populations separately.

12           (e) ~~[(e)]~~ Each semester or other academic term, an  
13 institution of higher education shall provide to the institution's  
14 liaison officer or officers the names of and information regarding  
15 the students described by Subsection (b) for whom the officer is  
16 designated.

17           (f) A ~~[(d) The]~~ liaison officer shall provide to the  
18 students described by Subsection (b) for whom the officer is  
19 designated information regarding support services including  
20 financial aid, on-campus and off-campus housing, food and meal  
21 programs, and counseling services, ~~[and]~~ other resources available  
22 to the students at the institution of higher education, and any  
23 other relevant information to assist the students.

24           (g) A ~~[(e) The]~~ liaison officer may participate in any  
25 training that enables the officer to carry out the officer's duties  
26 and coordinate with liaison officers at other educational  
27 institutions.

1           (h) [~~(f)~~] Each institution of higher education shall  
2 publicize, including through the institution's Internet website,  
3 social media, electronic mail, or other means of communication used  
4 by the institution:

5           (1) the name of and contact information for the  
6 institution's liaison officer or officers; and

7           (2) information regarding support services and other  
8 resources available at the institution to the students described by  
9 Subsection (b).

10          SECTION 2. The heading to Section 51.978, Education Code,  
11 is amended to read as follows:

12          Sec. 51.978. TEMPORARY HOUSING BETWEEN ACADEMIC TERMS FOR  
13 CERTAIN STUDENTS WHO WERE [~~FORMERLY~~] UNDER CONSERVATORSHIP OF  
14 DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES OR WHO ARE HOMELESS.

15          SECTION 3. Section 51.978(a), Education Code, is amended by  
16 adding Subdivision (3) to read as follows:

17                 (3) "Students who are homeless" has the meaning  
18 assigned to the term "homeless children and youths" under 42 U.S.C.  
19 Section 11434a and includes students who reside in a student  
20 housing facility maintained by an institution of higher education  
21 during an academic term but who are homeless between academic  
22 terms.

23          SECTION 4. Section 51.978(b), Education Code, is amended to  
24 read as follows:

25           (b) To be eligible to receive housing assistance from an  
26 institution of higher education under Subsection (c), a student  
27 must:

- 1           (1) be:
- 2                 (A) a student who has [~~have~~] been under the
- 3 conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services
- 4 or its predecessor in function on the day preceding:
- 5                     (i) [~~(A)~~] the student's 18th birthday; or
- 6                     (ii) [~~(B)~~] the date the student's
- 7 disabilities of minority are removed by a court under Chapter 31,
- 8 Family Code; or
- 9                     (B) a student who is homeless;
- 10           (2) be enrolled full-time at the institution during
- 11 the academic term immediately preceding the period for which the
- 12 student requests the housing assistance;
- 13           (3) be registered or otherwise have taken the actions
- 14 required by the institution to permit the student to enroll
- 15 full-time at the institution during the academic term immediately
- 16 following the period for which the student requests the housing
- 17 assistance; and
- 18           (4) lack other reasonable temporary housing
- 19 alternatives between the academic terms described by Subdivisions
- 20 (2) and (3), as determined by the institution.

21           SECTION 5. Subchapter 2, Chapter 51, Education Code, is

22 amended by adding Section 51.9781 to read as follows:

23           Sec. 51.9781. PRIORITY ACCESS TO STUDENT HOUSING FOR

24 STUDENTS WHO ARE HOMELESS. (a) In this section:

25                     (1) "Institution of higher education" has the meaning

26 assigned by Section 61.003.

27                     (2) "Students who are homeless" has the meaning

1 assigned to the term "homeless children and youths" under 42 U.S.C.  
2 Section 11434a and includes students who reside in a student  
3 housing facility maintained by an institution of higher education  
4 during an academic term but who are homeless between academic  
5 terms.

6 (b) Each institution of higher education that maintains  
7 student housing facilities shall give priority in the assignment of  
8 housing in those facilities to students who are homeless.

9 SECTION 6. Section 61.0908, Education Code, is amended to  
10 read as follows:

11 Sec. 61.0908. DESIGNATION OF LIAISON OFFICER TO ASSIST  
12 STUDENTS WHO WERE [~~FORMERLY~~] IN FOSTER CARE OR WHO ARE HOMELESS.

13 (a) In this section, "students who are homeless" has the meaning  
14 assigned to the term "homeless children and youths" under 42 U.S.C.  
15 Section 11434a and includes students who reside in a student  
16 housing facility maintained by an institution of higher education  
17 during an academic term but who are homeless between academic  
18 terms.

19 (b) The board shall designate at least one employee of the  
20 board to act as a liaison officer for the following current and  
21 incoming students at institutions of higher education:

22 (1) students who were formerly in the conservatorship  
23 of the Department of Family and Protective Services; and

24 (2) students who are homeless.

25 (c) The board may designate under Subsection (b) the same  
26 employee or employees to act as liaison officer for each student  
27 population described in that subsection or one or more different

1 employees to act as liaison officer for each of those student  
2 populations separately. A [~~The~~] liaison officer shall assist the  
3 students for whom the officer is designated in coordinating college  
4 readiness and student success efforts relating to the [~~those~~]  
5 students.

6 SECTION 7. The changes in law made by this Act apply  
7 beginning with the 2021-2022 academic year.

8 SECTION 8. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
9 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
10 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
11 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
12 Act takes effect September 1, 2021.