

By: Beckley

H.B. No. 1898

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT
2 relating to the exemption of tuition and laboratory fees at public
3 institutions of higher education for certain emergency operators or
4 dispatchers.

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

6 SECTION 1. Subchapter D, Chapter 54, Education Code, is
7 amended by adding Section 54.3533 to read as follows:

8 Sec. 54.3533. EMERGENCY OPERATORS OR DISPATCHERS ENROLLED
9 IN CERTAIN COURSES. (a) The governing board of an institution of
10 higher education shall exempt from the payment of tuition and
11 laboratory fees charged by the institution for courses relating to
12 emergency telecommunications, criminal justice, or emergency
13 medical services an undergraduate student who:

14 (1) is employed as an emergency response operator or
15 emergency services dispatcher by this state or by a political
16 subdivision of this state;

17 (2) is enrolled in a certificate or degree program
18 relating to emergency telecommunications, criminal justice, or
19 emergency medical services at the institution;

20 (3) is making satisfactory academic progress toward
21 the student's certificate or degree as determined by the
22 institution; and

23 (4) applies for the exemption at least one week before
24 the last date of the institution's regular registration period for

1 the applicable semester or other term.

2 (b) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), a student may not
3 receive an exemption under this section for any course if the
4 student has previously attempted a number of semester credit hours
5 for courses taken at any institution of higher education while
6 classified as a resident student for tuition purposes in excess of
7 the maximum number of those hours specified by Section 61.0595(a)
8 as eligible for funding under the formulas established under
9 Section 61.059.

10 (c) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), the governing board of
11 an institution of higher education may not provide exemptions under
12 this section to students enrolled in a specific class in a number
13 that exceeds 20 percent of the maximum student enrollment
14 designated by the institution for that class.

15 (d) An exemption provided under this section does not apply
16 to deposits that may be required in the nature of security for the
17 return or proper care of property loaned for the use of students.

18 (e) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall
19 adopt:

20 (1) rules governing the granting or denial of an
21 exemption under this section, including rules relating to the
22 determination of a student's eligibility for an exemption; and

23 (2) a uniform listing of certificate and degree
24 programs covered by the exemption under this section.

25 (f) If the legislature does not specifically appropriate
26 funds to an institution of higher education in an amount sufficient
27 to pay the institution's costs in complying with this section for a

1 semester or other term, the governing board of the institution
2 shall report to the Senate Finance Committee and the House
3 Appropriations Committee the cost to the institution of complying
4 with this section for that semester or other term.

5 SECTION 2. (a) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating
6 Board shall adopt the rules required by Section 54.3533, Education
7 Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after the
8 effective date of this Act.

9 (b) Section 54.3533, Education Code, as added by this Act,
10 applies beginning with tuition and laboratory fees charged for the
11 2021 fall semester. Tuition and laboratory fees charged for an
12 academic period before that semester are covered by the law in
13 effect immediately before the effective date of this Act, and the
14 former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

15 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
16 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
17 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
18 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
19 Act takes effect September 1, 2021.