

By: Thierry, Harrison, et al.

H.B. No. 1142

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)(1), and make best efforts to identify  
5 students described by Subsection (b)(2), from information provided  
6 to the institution in admission or financial aid applications or  
7 other available resources.

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

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

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

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

1 institutions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 must:

2 (1) be:

3 (A) a student who has [~~have~~] been under the  
4 conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services  
5 or its predecessor in function on the day preceding:

6 (i) [~~(A)~~] the student's 18th birthday; or

7 (ii) [~~(B)~~] the date the student's  
8 disabilities of minority are removed by a court under Chapter 31,  
9 Family Code; or

10 (B) a student who is homeless;

11 (2) be enrolled full-time at the institution during  
12 the academic term immediately preceding the period for which the  
13 student requests the housing assistance;

14 (3) be registered or otherwise have taken the actions  
15 required by the institution to permit the student to enroll  
16 full-time at the institution during the academic term immediately  
17 following the period for which the student requests the housing  
18 assistance; and

19 (4) lack other reasonable temporary housing  
20 alternatives between the academic terms described by Subdivisions  
21 (2) and (3), as determined by the institution.

22 SECTION 5. Subchapter 2, Chapter 51, Education Code, is  
23 amended by adding Section 51.9781 to read as follows:

24 Sec. 51.9781. PRIORITY ACCESS TO STUDENT HOUSING FOR  
25 STUDENTS WHO ARE HOMELESS. (a) In this section:

26 (1) "Institution of higher education" has the meaning  
27 assigned by Section 61.003.

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

7           (b) Each institution of higher education that maintains  
8 student housing facilities may give priority in the assignment of  
9 housing in those facilities to students who are homeless in  
10 accordance with priorities established in the institution's  
11 housing policy.

12           SECTION 6. Section 61.0908, Education Code, is amended to  
13 read as follows:

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

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

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

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

27           (2) students who are homeless.

1        (c) The board may designate under Subsection (b) the same  
2 employee or employees to act as liaison officer for each student  
3 described in that subsection or one or more different employees to  
4 act as liaison officer for each of those students separately. A  
5 [The] liaison officer shall assist the students for whom the  
6 officer is designated in coordinating college readiness and student  
7 success efforts relating to the ~~[those]~~ students.

8        SECTION 7. The changes in law made by this Act apply  
9 beginning with the 2023-2024 academic year.

10        SECTION 8. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
11 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
12 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
13 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
14 Act takes effect September 1, 2023.