

By: Wilson, et al.

H.B. No. 300

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program.

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

SECTION 1. Section 61.9771(b), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(b) The amount of a scholarship under this subchapter in an academic year is the lesser of:

(1) the greater of \$30,000 or an amount equal to the average cost of attendance at an institution of higher education in this state, as determined by board rule [~~\$15,000~~]; or

(2) the amount available for each scholarship from appropriations that may be used for scholarships under this subchapter for that academic year.

SECTION 2. Section 61.9772, Education Code, is amended by amending Subsections (a) and (b) and adding Subsection (b-1) to read as follows:

(a) To receive an initial scholarship under this subchapter, a student must:

(1) be enrolled in a public or private institution of higher education in this state and, while enrolled at the institution: [~~+~~]

(A) [~~(2)~~] enroll in and be a member in good standing of a Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program or another [~~undergraduate~~] officer commissioning program such as the

1 United States Marine Corps Platoon Leaders Class [~~while enrolled in~~
2 ~~a public or private institution of higher education in this state~~];

3 (B) submit to the board proof of the student's
4 successful completion of a program described by Paragraph (A); or

5 (C) submit to the board proof of the student's
6 acceptance into the officer commissioning program for the Texas
7 State Guard, as defined by Section 437.001, Government Code;

8 (2) [(3)] be appointed to receive a scholarship by the
9 governor, the lieutenant governor, a state senator, or a state
10 representative; and

11 (3) [(4)] enter into an agreement with the board under
12 Section 61.9773.

13 (b) In each year, the governor and the lieutenant governor
14 shall [~~may~~] each appoint two students and two alternates and each
15 state senator and each state representative shall [~~may~~] appoint one
16 student and one alternate to receive an initial scholarship under
17 this subchapter. If a student appointed under this subsection to
18 receive a scholarship fails to initially meet eligibility or
19 otherwise meet the requirements to initially receive the
20 scholarship, the board [~~Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board~~]
21 must notify the alternate on file of their nomination.

22 (b-1) A state senator or state representative shall make the
23 appointments required by Subsection (b) not later than September 30
24 of each year. If a state senator or state representative fails to
25 make a timely appointment in accordance with this subsection, the
26 lieutenant governor or the speaker of the house of representatives,
27 as appropriate, shall promptly fill the vacancy in appointment or

1 designate a member of their respective chamber to promptly make the
2 appointment on their behalf.

3 SECTION 3. Section 61.9773, Education Code, is amended to
4 read as follows:

5 Sec. 61.9773. AGREEMENT REQUIREMENTS. (a) To receive a
6 scholarship under this subchapter, a student must enter into an
7 agreement with the board as provided by this section. The agreement
8 must require the student to:

9 (1) satisfy one of the following requirements
10 [complete]:

11 (A) complete or submit to the board proof that
12 the student previously completed one year of ROTC training for each
13 year that the student receives the scholarship; ~~or~~

14 (B) complete or submit to the board proof that
15 the student previously completed another ~~[undergraduate]~~ officer
16 commissioning program such as the United States Marine Corps
17 Platoon Leaders Class; or

18 (C) submit to the board proof of the student's
19 acceptance into the officer commissioning program for the Texas
20 State Guard, as defined by Section 437.001, Government Code;

21 (2) graduate not later than six years after the date
22 the student first enrolls in a public or private institution of
23 higher education in this state;

24 (3) after graduation, enter into:

25 (A) a four-year commitment to be a member of the
26 Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, Texas State
27 Guard, United States Coast Guard, or United States Merchant Marine;

1 or

2 (B) a contract to serve as a commissioned officer
3 in any branch of the armed services of the United States;

4 (4) meet the physical examination requirements and all
5 other prescreening requirements of the Texas Army National Guard,
6 Texas Air National Guard, Texas State Guard, United States Coast
7 Guard, or United States Merchant Marine or the branch of the armed
8 services with which the student enters into a contract; and

9 (5) agree to repay the scholarship if the student:

10 (A) fails to maintain satisfactory academic
11 progress;

12 (B) withdraws from the scholarship program; or

13 (C) fails to fulfill a commitment or contract
14 described by Subdivision (3).

15 (b) The board shall adopt rules to exempt a student from the
16 repayment of a scholarship under an agreement entered into under
17 this section if the student is unable to meet the obligations of the
18 agreement solely as a result of:

19 (1) physical inability; or

20 (2) an extraordinary circumstance outside the
21 student's control.

22 (c) If the board determines that a student who entered into
23 an agreement with the board under this section was erroneously
24 removed from the scholarship program established under this
25 subchapter, the board shall reinstate the student's scholarship if
26 the student is currently enrolled in a public or private
27 institution of higher education in this state.

SECTION 4. Section 61.9775, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 61.9775. LIMITATIONS ON SCHOLARSHIP. ~~[(a)] A person may not receive a scholarship under this subchapter for more than four academic years [after earning a cumulative total of 150 credit hours or after being awarded a baccalaureate degree, whichever occurs first].~~

~~[(b) A scholarship awarded to a student under this subchapter shall be reduced for an academic year by the amount by which the full amount of the scholarship plus the total amount to be paid to the student for being under contract with one of the branches of the armed services of the United States exceeds the student's total cost of attendance for that academic year at the public or private institution of higher education in which the student is enrolled.]~~

SECTION 5. Subchapter FF, Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 61.9777 to read as follows:

Sec. 61.9777. SCHOLARSHIP COORDINATOR. The board shall designate an employee of the board to serve as a scholarship coordinator for scholarships awarded under this subchapter. The scholarship coordinator shall:

(1) serve as a liaison and point of contact for students appointed to receive a scholarship under this subchapter; and

(2) coordinate with financial aid offices at public and private institutions of higher education in this state and with relevant military personnel on behalf of scholarship recipients to

1 ensure students fully understand the requirements of this
2 subchapter.

3 SECTION 6. This Act applies beginning with the 2025-2026
4 academic year.

5 SECTION 7. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
6 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
7 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
8 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
9 Act takes effect September 1, 2025.