

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 255  
By: Hochberg  
Higher Education  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

The battle against terrorism has made crime fighting even more vital to public safety. Enrollment in law enforcement courses can provide peace officers with additional education and expertise for their counter-terrorism efforts. Current law exempts firemen enrolled in fire sciences courses from tuition and laboratory fees, but peace officers must pay full tuition and fees. In November 2001, as part of her Texas War Relief Package, Comptroller Strayhorn recommended extending this exemption to police officers. HB 255 provides a tuition and fees exemption for peace officers enrolled in a degree or certificate program in law enforcement.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Section 54.2085, Education Code) of this bill.

### **ANALYSIS**

HB 255 amends Subchapter D, Chapter 54, Education Code, by adding Section 54.2085 to provide that a person who is employed by an agency or political subdivision of this state as a peace officer for purposes of Section 2.12, Code of Criminal Procedure, and who with the consent of the employing agency or political subdivision is enrolled in a degree or certificate program in law enforcement at an institution of higher education, including a criminal justice or police science program, is exempt from the payment of tuition and fees for a course in which the person enrolls to satisfy a requirement for the degree or certificate program. The bill provides that the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board by rule shall prescribe procedures and forms to be used in determining the eligibility of a person for an exemption under this section. The bill provides this Act applies beginning with tuition and fees for the 2004 fall semester.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2003