

By: Giddings

H.B. No. 531

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1
2 relating to tuition rebate incentives for persons who complete
3 certain degree and certificate programs without excessive credit
4 hours.

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

6 SECTION 1. Section 54.0065, Education Code, is amended by
7 amending Subsections (a) - (f) and (h) and adding Subsections
8 (a-1), (a-2), and (h-1) to read as follows:

9 (a) In this section:

10 (1) "Coordinating board" means the Texas Higher
11 Education Coordinating Board.

12 (2) "General academic teaching institution," "public
13 junior college," and "public technical institute" have the meanings
14 assigned by Section 61.003.

15 (a-1) A qualified student at a general academic teaching
16 institution is eligible for a rebate of a portion of the
17 undergraduate tuition the student has paid if the student:

18 (1) is awarded a baccalaureate degree from the [~~a~~
19 ~~general academic teaching~~] institution; and

20 (2) has attempted no more than three hours in excess of
21 the minimum number of semester credit hours required to complete
22 the degree, including transfer credits and course credit earned
23 exclusively by examination.

24 (a-2) A qualified student at a public junior college, public

1 technical institute, or general academic teaching institution that
2 offers only freshman-level and sophomore-level courses is eligible
3 for a rebate of a portion of the undergraduate tuition the student
4 has paid if the student:

5 (1) is awarded an associate degree or other degree or
6 certificate in a program that requires at least 60 semester credit
7 hours; and

8 (2) has attempted no more than three hours in excess of
9 the minimum number of semester credit hours required to complete
10 the degree or certificate, including transfer credits and course
11 credit earned exclusively by examination.

12 (b) The amount of tuition to be rebated to a student under
13 Subsection (a-1) [~~this section~~] is \$1,000 and the amount of tuition
14 to be rebated to a student under Subsection (c) is \$500, unless the
15 total amount of undergraduate tuition paid by the student to the
16 institution of higher education awarding the degree or certificate
17 was less than that amount [~~\$1,000~~], in which event the amount of
18 tuition to be rebated is an amount equal to the amount of
19 undergraduate tuition paid by the student to the institution.
20 However, a student who paid the institution awarding the degree or
21 certificate an amount of undergraduate tuition less than the
22 applicable rebate amount specified by this subsection [~~\$1,000~~] may
23 qualify for an increase in the amount of the rebate, not to exceed a
24 total rebate in the applicable amount specified by this subsection
25 [~~of \$1,000~~], for any amount of undergraduate tuition the student
26 paid to other institutions of higher education by providing the
27 institution with proof of the total amount of that tuition paid to

1 other institutions of higher education.

2 (c) A student who has transferred from another institution
3 of higher education shall provide the institution awarding the
4 degree or certificate an official transcript from each institution
5 attended by the student in order that the total number of hours
6 attempted by the student can be verified.

7 (d) To qualify for a rebate under this section, the student
8 must have been a resident of this state and entitled to pay tuition
9 at the rate provided by this chapter for a resident student at all
10 times while pursuing the degree or certificate.

11 (e) All institutions of higher education shall notify each
12 first-time freshman student of the tuition rebate program under
13 this section.

14 (f) The institution awarding the degree or certificate
15 shall pay the rebate under this section from local funds.

16 (h) The legislature shall account in the General
17 Appropriations Act for the rebates authorized by this section to an
18 institution other than a public junior college in a way that
19 provides a corresponding increase in the general revenue funds
20 appropriated to the institution. It is the intent of the
21 legislature that rebates authorized by this section shall be
22 financed by savings to the state resulting from reductions in the
23 number of courses taken by undergraduate students.

24 (h-1) In addition to the amount appropriated for allocation
25 to public junior colleges under Section 130.003, the legislature
26 shall appropriate an amount sufficient to reimburse each public
27 junior college for any rebates paid by the college under this

1 section in the period used to determine the contact hours for the
2 allocation under Section 130.003. The coordinating board shall
3 transfer the appropriate portion of the amount appropriated under
4 this subsection to each public junior college in the same manner as
5 the coordinating board transfers money allocated to the college
6 under Section 130.003.

7 SECTION 2. (a) This Act takes effect September 1, 2003.

8 (b) The change in law made by this Act applies only to a
9 person who receives an associate degree or other degree or
10 certificate from a public junior college, public technical
11 institute, or general academic teaching institution that offers
12 only freshman-level and sophomore-level courses on or after the
13 effective date of this Act.