

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 25

By: Delisi

Defense Affairs & State-Federal Relations
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The dependents of military personnel often experience frequent moves during their educational careers. Difficulty with transfer of records and credits, repetitive tests, barriers to participation in extracurricular activities, and other items can add to the difficulties of a transfer.

The purpose of this legislation is to direct the Texas Education Agency to develop and expand upon multiple initiatives that offer assistance to the dependents of military personnel in Texas schools.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Commissioner of Education in SECTION 5 (Section 39.025 (d)) of this bill.

ANALYSIS

CSHB 25 assists school-age dependents of military personnel who transfer from one school to another. Student transfers will be assisted by: improving timely transfer of records; developing systems to ease transition during the first two weeks at a new school; fostering access to extracurricular programs; establishing procedures to lessen the impact of moves at the end of a student's junior year of high school; encouraging partnerships between military bases and affected school districts; assisting military students when applying for and seeking funding for postsecondary study; and providing additional assistance identified as needed.

This bill also amends Section 25 of the Education Code by shortening the time limit for records transfers by school districts from 30 days to 10 days after the child enrolls in a new public school. Parents or legal guardians have 30 days after the child enrolls to provide the necessary records.

CSHB 25 also amends Section 39 of the Education Code relating to exit-level performance. The commissioner of education is authorized to adopt one or more nationally recognized assessment instruments to administer to a student to qualify for a high school diploma if the student enrolls after January 1 of the school year in which the student is eligible to graduate. This applies to students who have enrolled in this state for either the first time, or after an absence of at least four years. The alternative exit exam is required to meet a performance level that is at least as rigorous as the usual exit-level assessment in the same subject.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2005.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL TO SUBSTITUTE

CSHB 25 modifies the original by adding a section that changes the time limit for records transfers by school districts from 30 days to 10 days after the student enrolls. It also adds an alternative exit exam option for students who are new to the state or have been attending school elsewhere for at least four years. The alternative must be at least as rigorous as the existing exit-level exams.