

By: Giddings

H.B. No. 609

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 (a-1),
8 (a-2), (h-1), and (j) 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) enrolls at a general academic teaching
19 institution:

20 (A) as a first-time freshman; or

21 (B) not later than the first fall semester
22 following the student's graduation from high school;

23 (2) is awarded a baccalaureate degree from the [a
24 general academic teaching] institution; and

1 (3) [~~(2)~~] has attempted no more than three hours in
2 excess of the minimum number of semester credit hours required to
3 complete the degree, including:

4 (A) transfer credits; and

5 (B) course credit earned exclusively by
6 examination, except that, for purposes of this subsection, only the
7 number of semester credit hours earned exclusively by examination
8 in excess of nine semester credit hours is treated as hours
9 attempted.

10 (a-2) A qualified student at a public junior college, public
11 technical institute, or general academic teaching institution that
12 offers only freshman-level and sophomore-level courses is eligible
13 for a rebate of a portion of the undergraduate tuition the student
14 has paid if the student:

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

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

22 (b) The amount of tuition to be rebated to a student under
23 Subsection (a-1) [~~this section~~] is \$1,000 and the amount of tuition
24 to be rebated to a student under Subsection (a-2) is \$500, unless
25 the total amount of undergraduate tuition paid by the student to the
26 institution of higher education awarding the degree or certificate
27 was less than that amount [~~\$1,000~~], in which event the amount of

1 tuition to be rebated is an amount equal to the amount of
2 undergraduate tuition paid by the student to the institution.
3 However, a student who paid the institution awarding the degree or
4 certificate an amount of undergraduate tuition less than the
5 applicable rebate amount specified by this subsection [~~\$1,000~~] may
6 qualify for an increase in the amount of the rebate, not to exceed a
7 total rebate in the applicable amount specified by this subsection
8 [~~of \$1,000~~], for any amount of undergraduate tuition the student
9 paid to other institutions of higher education by providing the
10 institution with proof of the total amount of that tuition paid to
11 other institutions of higher education.

12 (c) A student who has transferred from another institution
13 of higher education shall provide the institution awarding the
14 degree or certificate an official transcript from each institution
15 attended by the student in order that the total number of hours
16 attempted by the student can be verified.

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

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

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

26 (h) The legislature shall account in the General
27 Appropriations Act for the rebates authorized by this section to an

1 institution other than a public junior college in a way that
2 provides a corresponding increase in the general revenue funds
3 appropriated to the institution. It is the intent of the
4 legislature that rebates authorized by this section shall be
5 financed by savings to the state resulting from reductions in the
6 number of courses taken by undergraduate students.

7 (h-1) In addition to the amount appropriated for allocation
8 to public junior colleges under Section 130.003, the legislature
9 shall appropriate an amount sufficient to reimburse each public
10 junior college for any rebates paid by the college under this
11 section in the period used to determine the contact hours for the
12 allocation under Section 130.003. The coordinating board shall
13 transfer the appropriate portion of the amount appropriated under
14 this subsection to each public junior college in the same manner as
15 the coordinating board transfers money allocated to the college
16 under Section 130.003.

17 (j) This section does not apply to a student who enters a
18 public junior college or public technical institute for the first
19 time before the 2005 summer session. This subsection expires
20 January 1, 2011.

21 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
22 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
23 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
24 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
25 Act takes effect September 1, 2005.