

By: McReynolds

H.B. No. 1630

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to an excused absence from a public institution of higher education for a person called to active military service.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter Z, Chapter 51, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 51.9111 to read as follows:

Sec. 51.9111. EXCUSED ABSENCE FOR ACTIVE MILITARY SERVICE.

(a) In this section:

(1) "Institution of higher education" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

(2) "Active military service" includes active military service performed by a member of the Texas National Guard.

(b) This section applies only if:

(1) a student enrolled in an institution of higher education fails to attend classes or engage in other required activities because the student is called to active military service that is of a reasonably brief duration, as determined by rule adopted under Subsection (d); and

(2) the student chooses not to withdraw as authorized by Section 54.006(f).

(c) An institution of higher education shall excuse a student from attending classes or engaging in other required activities, including examinations, in order for the student to participate in active military service to which the student is

1 called, including travel associated with the service. A student  
2 whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized  
3 for that absence and shall be allowed to complete an assignment or  
4 take an examination from which the student is excused within a  
5 reasonable time after the absence. An instructor may appropriately  
6 respond if the student fails to satisfactorily complete the  
7 assignment or examination within a reasonable time after the  
8 absence.

9 (d) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall  
10 adopt rules as necessary to administer this section. The rules must  
11 establish a maximum period for which a student may be excused under  
12 this section. In establishing that period, the board shall  
13 consider the maximum period a student may be absent without  
14 significantly interfering with the student's ability to learn the  
15 course material, complete course assignments, and succeed  
16 academically during the applicable semester or other academic  
17 period.

18 SECTION 2. (a) This Act applies beginning with the 2005  
19 fall semester.

20 (b) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall  
21 adopt rules for administering Section 51.9111, Education Code, as  
22 added by this Act, as soon as practicable after this Act takes  
23 effect. For that purpose, the coordinating board may adopt the  
24 initial rules in the manner provided by law for adoption of  
25 emergency rules.

26 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
27 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as

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1 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
2 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
3 Act takes effect September 1, 2005.