

By: Zaffirini

S.B. No. 30

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1
2 relating to tuition and fee exemptions for students contracting to
3 graduate in a timely manner from public institutions of higher
4 education.

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

6 SECTION 1. Subchapter D, Chapter 54, Education Code, is
7 amended by adding Section 54.202 to read as follows:

8 Sec. 54.202. STUDENT CONTRACT TO GRADUATE IN A TIMELY
9 MANNER. (a) On written request of an undergraduate student, the
10 governing board of an institution of higher education shall enter
11 into a contract with the student to exempt the student from the
12 payment of the portion of tuition prescribed by this section if the
13 student satisfies the requirement of timely graduation and other
14 requirements established by the institution under the contract. A
15 student is not required to enter into a contract under this section.

16 (b) A student may not request an institution of higher
17 education to enter into a contract under this section after the end
18 of the student's first semester or term at the institution. Each
19 institution that offers an undergraduate degree program shall
20 notify each entering undergraduate student of the provisions of
21 this section not later than the sixth week of the student's first
22 semester or term.

23 (c) Each contract under this section must require a student
24 entering into the contract to:

1 (1) earn at least 30 required or elective credit hours
2 each academic year;

3 (2) enroll in any specified courses or types of
4 courses prescribed by the contract at the times required by the
5 contract;

6 (3) maintain good academic standing as prescribed in
7 the contract;

8 (4) in consultation with the student's academic
9 advisor, declare a major not later than the end of the student's
10 second academic year at the institution, in the case of a student
11 who enrolls and remains continuously enrolled in a general academic
12 teaching institution; and

13 (5) earn, as prescribed by the institution in the
14 contract, additional credit hours during one or more regular
15 semesters or summer sessions if the student's degree program
16 requires more than 120 credit hours for a bachelor's degree or more
17 than 60 credit hours for an associate degree.

18 (d) In addition to the provisions required under Subsection
19 (c), the institution of higher education offering a contract under
20 this section or the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board may
21 provide for any other reasonable provision to be included in a
22 contract under this section.

23 (e) A student who has entered into and satisfies the
24 requirements of a contract under this section and who submits an
25 application that is approved as described by Subsection (g) is
26 exempt from the payment of tuition authorized by this chapter for:

27 (1) the final 15 credit hours required for the

1 student's bachelor's degree program; or

2 (2) the final nine credit hours required for the
3 student's associate degree program.

4 (f) In addition to the tuition exemption under Subsection
5 (e), each contract under this section must require the institution
6 of higher education entering the contract to exempt a student
7 described by Subsection (e) from the payment of any tuition and fees
8 for a course required for the student's degree program that was
9 unavailable to the student at the appropriate time as specified by
10 the institution in the contract.

11 (g) A student who enters a contract under this section must
12 apply for an exemption under Subsection (e) or (f) in the manner
13 provided by the governing board of the institution of higher
14 education granting the exemption. The governing board shall
15 require an applicant for an exemption to submit satisfactory
16 evidence that the applicant is entitled to the exemption.

17 (h) An institution of higher education may not contract
18 under this section with a student who transfers to the institution
19 from another public or private institution of higher education. A
20 student's transfer from one institution of higher education to
21 another voids a contract entered into by the student under this
22 section with the prior institution, other than a contract for which
23 an exemption has previously been awarded to the student under
24 Subsection (e)(2). A person who is eligible to apply for an
25 exemption under that subdivision is ineligible to receive an
26 exemption under Subsection (e)(1), regardless of whether the
27 student claims the exemption available to the student under

1 Subsection (e)(2).

2 (i) This section does not apply to a student seeking a
3 certificate at a public junior college.

4 (j) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall
5 adopt rules consistent with this section as necessary to implement
6 this section, including rules to allow an otherwise qualified
7 student to receive an exemption under this section if the student is
8 unable to satisfy a requirement for the exemption solely as a
9 result of a hardship or other good cause.

10 (k) A student may not receive an exemption from tuition or
11 fees under this section for a semester or session before the 2006
12 fall semester. This subsection expires January 1, 2008.

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