

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
80R3351 JRJ-F

H.B. 1187
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Education
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

"Taps" was originally written during the peninsula campaign of the Civil War by Major General Daniel Butterfield. Over time, "Taps" became a signal for the end of the day and a song of farewell to a fallen comrade. "Taps" has become synonymous with military funerals. Unfortunately, there is a lack of available musicians to perform "Taps" at military funeral services.

H.B. 1187 provides a tuition exemption program to allow eligible students to play "Taps" at military funeral services in exchange for a tuition voucher at an institution of higher education in Texas.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Veterans Commission in SECTION 1 (Section 434.0072, Government code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 434, Government Code, by adding Section 434.0072, as follows:

Sec. 434.0072. "TAPS" TUITION VOUCHER PROGRAM. (a) Defines "institution of higher education" and "private or independent institution of higher education."

(b) Requires the Texas Veterans Commission (commission) to establish a program to issue vouchers to be exchanged for an exemption from the payment of tuition and required fees at an institution of higher education as provided by Section 54.215, Education Code, to students in grades 6 through 12 or at postsecondary educational institutions who sound "Taps" on a bugle, trumpet, or cornet during military honors funerals held in this state for deceased veterans. Requires a voucher to be issued in the amount of \$25 for each time a student sounds "Taps" as described by this subsection.

(c) Requires the commission by rule to design a form for the vouchers and distribute the form, with an explanation of the form's use, to each funeral director in this state for issuance to a person who is eligible to receive a voucher under this section. Prohibits the commission from charging a fee for distribution of the form.

(d) Requires the commission to encourage a private or independent institution of higher education to grant a tuition and fee exemption in exchange for a voucher.

(e) Authorizes a voucher issued under this section to be used by the student at any time and provides that a voucher is not transferable.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 25.087, Education Code, by adding Subsection (c), as follows:

(c) Authorizes a school district to excuse a student in grades 6 through 12 for the purpose of sounding "Taps" at a military honors funeral held in this state for a deceased veteran. Prohibits a student whose absence is excused under this subsection from being penalized

for that absence and requires the student to be counted as if the student attended school for purposes of calculating the average daily attendance of students in the school district. Requires a student whose absence is excused under this subsection to be allowed a reasonable time to make up school work missed on those days. Requires a day of absence to be counted as a day of compulsory attendance if the student satisfactorily completes the school work.

SECTION 3. Amends Subchapter D, Chapter 54, Education Code, by adding Section 54.215, as follows:

Sec. 54.215. PARTICIPANTS IN MILITARY FUNERALS. Requires the governing board of each institution of higher education to provide a \$25 exemption from tuition and required fees under this chapter to a student in exchange for a voucher issued to the student under Section 434.0072, Government Code, that is presented by the student to the institution.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2007.