

1-1 By: Morrison (Senate Sponsor - Van de Putte) H.B. No. 1187  
1-2 (In the Senate - Received from the House April 16, 2007;  
1-3 April 17, 2007, read first time and referred to Subcommittee on  
1-4 Higher Education; May 10, 2007, reported favorably from Committee  
1-5 on Education by the following vote: Yeas 7, Nays 0; May 10, 2007,  
1-6 sent to printer.)

1-7 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
1-8 AN ACT

1-9 relating to vouchers for tuition and required fees at certain  
1-10 institutions of higher education for students who sound "Taps" at a  
1-11 veteran's funeral.

1-12 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

1-13 SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 434, Government Code, is  
1-14 amended by adding Section 434.0072 to read as follows:

1-15 Sec. 434.0072. "TAPS" TUITION VOUCHER PROGRAM. (a) In this  
1-16 section, "institution of higher education" and "private or  
1-17 independent institution of higher education" have the meanings  
1-18 assigned by Section 61.003, Education Code.

1-19 (b) The commission shall establish a program to issue  
1-20 vouchers to be exchanged for an exemption from the payment of  
1-21 tuition and required fees at an institution of higher education as  
1-22 provided by Section 54.215, Education Code, to students in grades 6  
1-23 through 12 or at postsecondary educational institutions who sound  
1-24 "Taps" on a bugle, trumpet, or cornet during military honors  
1-25 funerals held in this state for deceased veterans. A voucher must  
1-26 be issued in the amount of \$25 for each time a student sounds "Taps"  
1-27 as described by this subsection.

1-28 (c) The commission by rule shall design a form for the  
1-29 vouchers and distribute the form, with an explanation of the form's  
1-30 use, to each funeral director in this state for issuance to a person  
1-31 who is eligible to receive a voucher under this section. The  
1-32 commission may not charge a fee for distribution of the form.

1-33 (d) The commission shall encourage a private or independent  
1-34 institution of higher education to grant a tuition and fee  
1-35 exemption in exchange for a voucher.

1-36 (e) A voucher issued under this section may be used by the  
1-37 student at any time and is not transferable.

1-38 SECTION 2. Section 25.087, Education Code, is amended by  
1-39 adding Subsection (c) to read as follows:

1-40 (c) A school district may excuse a student in grades 6  
1-41 through 12 for the purpose of sounding "Taps" at a military honors  
1-42 funeral held in this state for a deceased veteran. A student whose  
1-43 absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for  
1-44 that absence and shall be counted as if the student attended school  
1-45 for purposes of calculating the average daily attendance of  
1-46 students in the school district. A student whose absence is excused  
1-47 under this subsection shall be allowed a reasonable time to make up  
1-48 school work missed on those days. If the student satisfactorily  
1-49 completes the school work, the day of absence shall be counted as a  
1-50 day of compulsory attendance.

1-51 SECTION 3. Subchapter D, Chapter 54, Education Code, is  
1-52 amended by adding Section 54.215 to read as follows:

1-53 Sec. 54.215. PARTICIPANTS IN MILITARY FUNERALS. The  
1-54 governing board of each institution of higher education shall  
1-55 provide a \$25 exemption from tuition and required fees under this  
1-56 chapter to a student in exchange for a voucher issued to the student  
1-57 under Section 434.0072, Government Code, that is presented by the  
1-58 student to the institution.

1-59 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
1-60 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
1-61 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
1-62 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
1-63 Act takes effect September 1, 2007.

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