

By: Zaffirini

S.B. No. 1051

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

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AN ACT

relating to course requirements for students enrolled in joint degree programs between certain general academic teaching institutions and foreign universities.

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

SECTION 1. Section 51.301, Education Code, is amended by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsections (c), (d), and (e) to read as follows:

(a) Every college and university receiving state support or state aid from public funds shall give a course of instruction in government or political science which includes consideration of the Constitution of the United States and the constitutions of the states, with special emphasis on that of Texas. This course shall have a credit value of not less than six semester hours or its equivalent. Except as provided by Subsection (c), a ~~[No]~~ college or university receiving state support or state aid from public funds may not grant a baccalaureate degree or a lesser degree or academic certificate to any person unless the person ~~[he]~~ has credit for such a course. The college or university may determine that a student has satisfied this requirement in whole or in part on the basis of credit granted to the student ~~[him]~~ by the college or university for a substantially equivalent course completed at another accredited college or university or on the basis of the student's successful completion of an advanced standing examination administered on the

1 conditions and under the circumstances common for the college or  
2 university's advanced standing examinations. The college or  
3 university may grant as much as three semester hours of credit or  
4 its equivalent toward satisfaction of this requirement for  
5 substantially equivalent work completed by the student in the  
6 program of an approved senior R.O.T.C. unit.

7 (c) The governing board of a general academic teaching  
8 institution that offers a joint baccalaureate degree program under  
9 a contract with a foreign college or university may exempt a student  
10 enrolled in the joint degree program from the course requirement  
11 prescribed by Subsection (a) if the student:

12 (1) enrolled in the foreign college or university  
13 before enrolling in the joint degree program or is otherwise  
14 considered to be primarily a student of the foreign college or  
15 university; and

16 (2) successfully completes the American Way course  
17 described by Subsection (d) at the institution the student attends  
18 or, with the approval of that institution, at another general  
19 academic teaching institution that offers the course.

20 (d) The American Way course authorized by Subsection (c)(2)  
21 must be designed to provide a foreign student with a familiarity and  
22 understanding of United States government and civic life and their  
23 sources, development, and character. The course must concentrate  
24 on important texts, including the United States Constitution and  
25 the Declaration of Independence, on the works and contributions of  
26 influential authors, political and cultural leaders, and other  
27 important figures, and on important events and developments in

1 United States history. The course must cover important  
2 developments in human and civil rights, including the civil rights  
3 movement and the history of women's rights. The course must cover  
4 the history and development of the State of Texas and its place in  
5 United States history and culture. The course must consist of four  
6 semester credit hours, with one semester credit hour in practicum  
7 activities intended to provide the student with experience in the  
8 three branches of government through participation at the federal,  
9 state, or local level. The course may not be taken for course  
10 credit by a student other than a student described by Subsection  
11 (c).

12 (e) In this section, "general academic teaching  
13 institution" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

14 SECTION 2. Section 51.302, Education Code, is amended to  
15 read as follows:

16 Sec. 51.302. AMERICAN OR TEXAS HISTORY. (a) In this  
17 section, "general academic teaching institution" has the meaning  
18 assigned by Section 61.003.

19 (b) Except as provided by Subsection (c), a [No] college or  
20 university receiving state support or state aid from public funds  
21 may not grant a baccalaureate degree or a lesser degree or academic  
22 certificate to any person unless the person [he] has credit for six  
23 semester hours or its equivalent in American History. A student is  
24 entitled to submit as much as three semester hours of credit or its  
25 equivalent in Texas History in partial satisfaction of this  
26 requirement. The college or university may determine that a  
27 student has satisfied this requirement in whole or part on the basis

1 of credit granted to the student [~~him~~] by the college or university  
2 for a substantially equivalent course completed at another  
3 accredited college or university, or on the basis of the student's  
4 successful completion of an advanced standing examination  
5 administered on the conditions and under the circumstances common  
6 for the college or university's advanced standing examinations.  
7 The college or university may grant as much as three semester hours  
8 of credit or its equivalent toward satisfaction of this requirement  
9 for substantially equivalent work completed by a student in the  
10 program of an approved senior R.O.T.C. unit.

11 (c) The governing board of a general academic teaching  
12 institution that offers a joint baccalaureate degree program under  
13 a contract with a foreign college or university may exempt a student  
14 enrolled in the joint degree program from the course requirement  
15 prescribed by Subsection (b) if the student:

16 (1) enrolled in the foreign college or university  
17 before enrolling in the joint degree program or is otherwise  
18 considered to be primarily a student of the foreign college or  
19 university; and

20 (2) successfully completes the American Way course  
21 described by Section 51.301(d) at the institution the student  
22 attends or, with the approval of that institution, at another  
23 general academic teaching institution that offers the course.

24 SECTION 3. Section 61.822, Education Code, is amended by  
25 adding Subsection (e) to read as follows:

26 (e) The governing board of a general academic teaching  
27 institution that offers a joint baccalaureate degree program under

1 a contract with a foreign college or university may, in  
2 consultation with the foreign college or university, identify and  
3 approve courses offered by the foreign college or university that  
4 are equivalent to, and may substitute for, courses in the core  
5 curriculum of a student enrolled in the joint degree program who is  
6 considered to be primarily a student of the general academic  
7 teaching institution.

8         SECTION 4. The governing board of an institution of higher  
9 education to which Subsection (e), Section 61.822, Education Code,  
10 as added by this Act, applies may permit a student enrolled in a  
11 joint degree program to which that section applies to substitute  
12 another course for a course in the core curriculum as permitted by  
13 that section regardless of whether the student completed the course  
14 before the effective date of this Act.

15         SECTION 5. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
16 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
17 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
18 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
19 Act takes effect September 1, 2007.