

By: Zaffirini

S.B. No. 1052

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to tuition credits for students who complete the core curriculum at two-year public institutions of higher education.

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

SECTION 1. Chapter 56, Education Code, is amended by adding Subchapter Z to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER Z. OTHER STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Sec. 56.901. TUITION CREDITS FOR STUDENT COMPLETING CORE CURRICULUM AT TWO-YEAR INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION. (a) In this section:

(1) "Coordinating board" means the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

(2) "General academic teaching institution," "public junior college," "public state college," and "public technical institute" have the meanings assigned by Section 61.003.

(b) The coordinating board shall establish a program under which an eligible student is entitled to receive credit against a portion of the tuition charged by a general academic teaching institution to the student during the student's enrollment at that institution.

(c) A student is eligible to receive tuition credit under this section if the student:

(1) is a resident of this state;

(2) enrolls at a public junior college, public state

1 college, or public technical institute not later than the first
2 fall semester following the student's graduation from high school;

3 (3) successfully completes the core curriculum at a
4 public junior college, public state college, or public technical
5 institute before the third fall semester following the student's
6 graduation from high school, regardless of whether the student:

7 (A) remains continuously enrolled at the same
8 college or institute during that period; or

9 (B) completes any portion of the core curriculum
10 through concurrent enrollment;

11 (4) after completing the core curriculum as described
12 by Subdivision (3), enrolls at a general academic teaching
13 institution not later than the third fall semester following the
14 student's graduation from high school;

15 (5) meets financial need requirements prescribed by
16 coordinating board rule; and

17 (6) complies with any additional eligibility
18 requirements prescribed by coordinating board rule.

19 (d) Except as otherwise provided by Subsection (e), an
20 eligible student is entitled to a tuition credit in an amount equal
21 to one-fourth of the total amount of tuition charged for each
22 semester or other academic term in which the student is enrolled at
23 the general academic teaching institution, excluding tuition
24 charged under Section 54.0513 or another provision authorizing the
25 institution to establish tuition rates. A student may use a tuition
26 credit only for the semester or term for which it is awarded.

27 (e) Except as provided by Subsection (k), a student is not

1 eligible for a tuition credit under this section for a semester or
2 other term that begins after the second anniversary of the date the
3 student first enrolled at the general academic teaching
4 institution.

5 (f) For the applicable enrollment period, a general
6 academic teaching institution shall apply to a student's tuition
7 charges the amount of the tuition credit to which the student is
8 entitled.

9 (g) As soon as practicable after a tuition credit is used
10 under this section, the general academic teaching institution shall
11 report to the coordinating board the name of the student using the
12 credit and the amount of credit used.

13 (h) A general academic teaching institution is entitled to
14 reimbursement for the cost of providing a tuition credit to an
15 eligible student under this section. The coordinating board shall
16 reimburse the institution in the appropriate amount from
17 appropriations available for that purpose.

18 (i) At the beginning of each school year, each public high
19 school in this state shall provide information regarding the
20 requirements of the program under this section to each senior
21 student enrolled at the high school and to a parent, conservator, or
22 guardian of the student. Each public junior college, public state
23 college, or public technical institute shall notify each entering
24 undergraduate student of the program requirements not later than
25 the sixth week of the student's first semester or term.

26 (j) The Texas Education Agency and the coordinating board
27 jointly shall prepare a publication that includes the information

1 required to be provided under Subsection (i) and shall post that
2 publication on the website of each in a form that enables a public
3 high school, public junior college, public state college, or public
4 technical institute to reproduce the information for distribution
5 to students, parents, and other persons as required by this
6 section.

7 (k) The coordinating board shall adopt rules to administer
8 this section, including rules requiring an eligible student to
9 apply for a tuition credit under this section and to provide the
10 information required to verify the student's eligibility. The
11 rules must provide procedures by which an otherwise eligible
12 student may be granted additional time to receive or use tuition
13 credits under this section if the student shows hardship or other
14 good cause that prevented the student from successfully completing
15 the core curriculum, using the tuition credits, or enrolling in an
16 institution within the applicable period prescribed by this
17 section. For purposes of this subsection, hardship or other good
18 cause includes:

19 (1) a severe illness or other debilitating condition;
20 (2) responsibility for the care of a sick or injured
21 person or person otherwise in need of assistance; or

22 (3) active duty or other service in the United States
23 armed forces.

24 (1) A student may not receive a tuition credit under this
25 section for a semester or term before the 2009 fall semester, and
26 may not establish eligibility for a credit based in any part on
27 higher education coursework completed before the 2007 fall

1 semester. This subsection expires January 1, 2011.

2 SECTION 2. As soon as practicable after the effective date
3 of this Act, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall
4 adopt rules for the administration of Section 56.901, Education
5 Code, as added by this Act. The coordinating board may adopt the
6 initial rules in the manner provided by law for emergency rules.

7 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
8 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
9 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
10 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
11 Act takes effect September 1, 2007.