

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
81R35487 JRJ-F

C.S.H.B. 269
By: Lucio III et al. (Van de Putte)
Veteran Affairs & Military Installations
5/20/2009
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Higher education is vital for success in our modern economy, however, according to the latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau, only 25 percent of veterans have graduated from a college or university. Providing an incentive and support for veterans to pursue a college education after returning from service is an important means to help them succeed as they assimilate back into civilian life. This bill recognizes the educational value of the occupational specialty and training a veteran receives while in the military and encourages veterans to enroll in and graduate from college.

C.S.H.B. 269 awards course credit for all physical education courses required for an undergraduate degree and up to 12 additional elective semester credit hours that may be applied to satisfy an elective course requirement for the student's degree program for courses outside the student's major or minor to a veteran who has graduated from a certain high school and who is honorably discharged and either completed a minimum of two years of service or was discharged because of a disability.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to institutions of higher education in SECTION 1 (Section 51.3042, Education Code) of this bill.

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Section 51.3042, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter F, Chapter 51, Education Code, by adding Section 51.3042, as follows:

Sec. 51.3042. AWARD OF COURSE CREDIT FOR MILITARY SERVICE. (a) Defines "institution of higher education."

(b) Requires an institution of higher education (institution) to award to an undergraduate student who is admitted to the institution, including a student who is readmitted under Section 51.9242 (Readmission of Student Who Withdraws to Perform Active Military Service), course credit for all physical education courses required by the institution for an undergraduate degree and for additional semester credit hours, not to exceed 12, that may be applied to satisfy any equivalent elective course requirements for the student's degree program for courses outside the student's major or minor if the student meets certain requirements.

(c) Provides that this section does not prohibit an institution from awarding additional course credit for a student's military service as the institution considers appropriate.

(d) Authorizes an institution to adopt rules requiring reasonable proof from a student of the fact and duration of the student's military service and of the student's military discharge status.

(e) Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to adopt rules establishing standards for determining the equivalency of military service experience to elective course requirements for which a student is authorized to receive credit under Subsection (b).

SECTION 2. Amends Subchapter Z, Chapter 51, Education Code, by adding Section 51.9112, as follows:

Sec. 51.9112. RESERVE OFFICERS' TRAINING CORPS (ROTC) PROGRAM: FEES AND COURSE CREDIT. (a) Requires THECB, in consultation with institutions, to determine a standard fee for a course offered through a Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program that takes into account the average statewide cost per student to an institution in providing the program, not including any reimbursement or other amounts the institution receives from the applicable military service or other source for offering the course. Prohibits the governing board of each institution (board), except as provided by Subsection (b), from charging a student enrolled in an ROTC course any amount for the course in excess of the fee as determined by THECB under this subsection.

(b) Authorizes the board, if the board offers course credit toward a student's degree for a course in which the student enrolls for the purposes of an ROTC program, to charge the student tuition for that course as otherwise provided by Chapter 54 (Tuition and Fees) after subtracting any reimbursement or other amount the institution receives from the applicable military service or other source for offering the course.

(c) Requires the board, to the extent it will not adversely affect the accreditation status of an institution with the appropriate accrediting agency, to count courses in which a student enrolls for the purposes of an ROTC program, including courses for which the student does not receive course credit toward the student's degree, in determining whether the student is enrolled as a full-time student.

SECTION 3. Provides that Section 51.3042, Education Code, as added by this Act, applies to a student attending an institution, without regard to whether the student was admitted to the institution before the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 4. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2009.