

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 1737
By: Gonzales
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Current law dictates that a student can only earn up to 30 additional hours of credit beyond the core curriculum of the student's degree plan and still pay in-state tuition. This "30-hour rule" unintentionally penalizes a community college student who earns an associate's degree and subsequently transfers to a four-year institution to seek a higher degree. Since many hours are not transferrable, the student can break the 30-hour rule, which then results in higher tuition. This bill seeks to allow and encourage a community college student to attain an associate degree without being penalized upon transferring to a four-year institution.

H.B. 1737 exempts credit hours applied towards an earned associate's degree from the 30-hour limit on additional courses that are eligible for funding under the higher education funding formulas.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 1737 amends the Education Code to exclude semester hours earned by a student before receiving an associate degree that has been previously awarded to the student, as well as semester hours earned before receiving a previously awarded bachelor's degree, in determining whether the student has previously earned the number of semester credit hours allowed under the funding formulas devised and established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for the use of the governor and the Legislative Budget Board in making appropriations recommendations to the legislature for higher education. The bill makes its provisions applicable beginning with the funding recommendations for the 2011-2012 academic year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

On passage, or, if the act does not receive the necessary vote, the act takes effect September 1, 2009.