

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 3452
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Defense & Veterans' Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) is a college elective program that enables students to become commissioned officers in the U. S. armed forces. ROTC programs are conducted at senior military colleges, civilian colleges, and military junior colleges. Other than the U.S. Coast Guard, every branch of the armed forces commissions officers through ROTC.

H.B. 3452 creates the Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program to encourage and promote increased participation in ROTC programs at state civilian colleges. The bill authorizes conditional scholarships of \$15,000 annually to students who participate in an ROTC program and deducts from the scholarship any amount paid to a student after contracting with any branch of the armed forces. The bill grants authority to the governor, the lieutenant governor, and each member of the senate and the house of representatives to annually appoint two qualified applicants to receive a scholarship and authorizes funding for the program to be made available by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board through gifts, grants, public or private donations, or appropriation of state funds. The bill establishes obligations on the part of recipients for failure to fulfill scholarship standards and authorizes the coordinating board to make rules to implement the program.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 3452 amends the Education Code to create the Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program. The bill establishes that an armed services scholarship is an annual conditional grant of \$15,000, available for use at any Texas public institution of higher education with a Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program and conditioned on certain obligations. The bill requires any amount paid to a student for being under contract with one of the branches of the U.S. armed forces to be deducted from the scholarship.

H.B. 3452 authorizes the governor, lieutenant governor, the members of the senate, and the members of the house of representatives to each have the power to annually appoint two scholarship recipients who possess the requisite qualifications. The bill requires a student, in order to qualify, to meet minimum college entrance requirements at a Texas public university and maintain a level of satisfactory academic progress required by the student's university.

H.B. 3452 requires a student, in order to fulfill the student's commitments to the Armed Services Scholarship program, to complete four years of ROTC training and graduate within five years; upon graduation, enter into a four-year commitment to be a member of the Texas State Guard, the Texas Army, or the Air Force National Guard, or a contract to serve as a commissioned officer with any branch of the U.S. armed forces; and meet the physical examination requirements and all other pre-screening requirements of the Texas State Guard, the Texas

Army, the Air Force National Guard, or the branch of the armed force with which the student enters into a contract.

H.B. 3452 establishes that, if at any time, an armed services scholarship recipient fails to maintain satisfactory academic progress, withdraws from the program, or fails to fulfill the required commitment to the Texas State Guard, the Texas Army, or the Air Force National Guard, or a contract with a branch of the U.S. armed forces, for any reason other than a physical inability to meet the required commitments, all funds advanced to the recipient to that point under the program become a debt due and owed the state. The bill authorize the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to solicit and accept gifts, grants, and donations from any public or private source for the purpose of the program and authorizes the legislature to appropriate money for the program. The bill authorizes the board to make rules to implement the purposes of these provisions.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2009.