

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 4476
By: Cohen
Higher Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In 1971, the Texas Legislature created the Texas Tuition Equalization Grant Program (TEG), which reduces taxpayer costs for higher education by providing limited financial assistance to needy Texas students attending Texas independent institutions of higher education. TEG helps to bridge the tuition gap between lower priced state universities and independent institutions and encourages independent institutions to expand and continue to assume their share of the burden of educating a growing student population. It is currently the state's oldest General Revenue funded program of student financial assistance.

The 79th Legislature modified the TEG program to make some of its requirements reflect those of the more recently created TEXAS Grant program (1999). HB 4467 addresses the remaining inconsistencies by further modifying the eligibility requirements for TEG to mirror those of the TEXAS Grant program.

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

House Bill 4476 amends the Education code to modify the eligibility requirements for a student to qualify for and continue to receive a TEG. The bill provides that in order to be eligible for a TEG in the first academic year in which the person receives the grant, a person must be enrolled in at least three-fourths of a full course load conforming to an individual degree plan in an approved college or university and make satisfactory academic progress toward a degree or certificate as determined by the institution at which the person is enrolled.

The bill amends the Education Code to specify that a person may receive a TEG in a subsequent academic year if, in addition to meeting the eligibility requirements set forth for the first academic year, the person completed at least 24 semester credit hours in the person's most recent full academic year, if the person is enrolled in an undergraduate degree or certificate program; or 18 semester credit hours in the person's most recent full academic year, if the person is enrolled in a graduate or professional degree program.

The bill amends the Education Code to specify that failing to meet the institution's satisfactory academic progress standard in the first year is one of the circumstances by which hardship provisions may be used to continue a student in the TEG program.

The bill provides that changes in law made by the bill are applicable beginning with tuition equalization grants awarded for the 2010-2011 academic year and that grants made before that time are subject to the requirements then in effect.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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