

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

S.B. 43  
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Higher Education  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Although Texas statute authorizes tuition exemptions for former foster youth, these students face additional challenges as they transition into higher education. Currently, students must enroll at an institution of higher education by 21 years of age to secure their tuition benefits. This expectation is contrary to evidence that former foster youth may need time to mature, additional support, and structure, before realizing the benefits of higher education. This bill encourages foster youth to participate in dual credit programs. These programs offer students academic rigor and an early introduction to higher education.

S.B. 43 extends the maximum age limit for a student who has been in foster care or other residential care under Department of Family and Protective Services conservatorship to enroll in an institution of higher education and receive a tuition and fee exemption to 25 years of age and allows such a student to enroll in dual credit courses to meet the program criteria.

### **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**

S.B. 43 amends the Education Code to add tuition and fees charged by a public institution of higher education for a dual credit course or other course for which a high school student may earn joint high school and college credit to the tuition and fee exemption for a student who is or has been in foster care or other residential care under the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). The bill extends the deadline, from a student's 21st birthday to a student's 25th birthday, by which a student who has been under the conservatorship of DFPS must enroll in an institution of higher education as an undergraduate to be exempt from payment of tuition and fees and removes certain qualifying deadlines that such a student was required to meet to receive the tuition exemption. The bill makes its provisions applicable beginning with tuition and other fees charged for the 2009 fall semester.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

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