

BILL ANALYSIS

S.B. 297
By: Van de Putte
Defense & Veterans' Affairs
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently, veterans who are not Texans but who want to attend a public college or university in Texas are required to pay out-of-state tuition and fees until they have lived in Texas for one year. Non-Texas veterans who may be interested in settling in Texas may be hesitant to attend college here because of the out-of-state tuition costs. Senate Bill 297 would deliver real support to veterans while helping strengthen Texas' economy by attracting and keeping talent in the state. Expanding in-state tuition benefits to military veterans and their spouses and children is a fitting way to recognize those who have served, led, and protected our country.

SB 297 would allow veterans and their spouses and children to pay in-state tuition and fees without regard to the length of time they have resided in Texas.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Section 54.058, Education Code) of this bill.

ANALYSIS

SB 297 amends the Education Code to entitle a person to pay tuition and fees at an institution of higher education at the rates provided for Texas residents without regard to the length of time the person has resided in Texas if the person files with the institution a letter of intent to establish residence in Texas and resides in Texas while enrolled in the institution and the person is: eligible for benefits under the federal Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 or any other federal law authorizing educational benefits for veterans; the spouse of a person who is eligible for such benefits; or a child, including a step-child, of a person who is eligible for such benefits who is 25 years of age or younger on the first day of the semester or other academic term for which the person is registering, with the exception that the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board by rule shall prescribe procedures by which a child or step-child who suffered from a severe illness or other debilitating condition that affected the person's ability to use the benefit provided by the bill before reaching the age of 25 may be granted additional time to use the benefit corresponding to the time the person was unable to use the benefit because of the illness or condition. The bill defines "child" to include a stepchild.

SB 297 makes its provisions applicable beginning with tuition and other fees charged for the 2009 fall semester.

SB 297 requires the coordinating board to adopt rules for the delayed use of such benefits as soon as practicable. The bill authorizes the coordinating board to adopt the initial rules in the manner provided by law for emergency rules.

EFFECTIVE DATE

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