

By: Morrison, Branch

H.B. No. 3795

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the public awareness campaign promoting higher education and to additional financial aid for higher education.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 61.9701(a), Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

(a) The board, in conjunction with the Texas Education Agency, shall establish a statewide public awareness campaign to promote the value and availability of higher education.

SECTION 2. Sections 61.9702 and 61.9703, Education Code, are amended to read as follows:

Sec. 61.9702. TARGET AUDIENCE. (a) The campaign established by the board must target ~~[primary and secondary school]~~ students in the 6th through 12th grade levels.

(b) The board shall give priority to reaching ~~[primary and secondary school]~~ students from groups or backgrounds that are traditionally underrepresented in higher education, especially students who are educationally disadvantaged, as defined by Section 5.001.

(c) The campaign established by the board may target students in elementary grades, including grade six.

Sec. 61.9703. COORDINATION WITH OTHER ENTITIES ~~[AGENCIES]~~. The board shall ~~[may]~~ coordinate with the Texas Education Agency, the P-16 Council established under Section 61.076, and other

1 appropriate entities, including businesses, [~~other agencies as~~
2 necessary] to develop and implement the public awareness campaign
3 in order to send a strong message concerning the importance of
4 higher education.

5 SECTION 3. Subchapter CC, Chapter 61, Education Code, is
6 amended by adding Section 61.97031 to read as follows:

7 Sec. 61.97031. CAMPAIGN DESIGN CRITERIA. The board, in
8 conjunction with those entities with which the board coordinates
9 under Section 61.9703, shall:

10 (1) annually hold meetings of students described by
11 Section 61.9702 and their parents, at locations likely to be easily
12 accessible to them, to explain:

13 (A) financial aid opportunities that may make
14 attending an institution of higher education affordable;

15 (B) the reasons that higher education is
16 important; and

17 (C) secondary education courses that may help to
18 prepare students to succeed at institutions of higher education;
19 and

20 (2) develop support mechanisms for parents of students
21 described by Section 61.9702 to:

22 (A) assist the parents with understanding and
23 completing the free application for federal student aid (FAFSA);
24 and

25 (B) familiarize the parents with the actions
26 necessary for students to be prepared for, apply to, and attend
27 institutions of higher education.

1 SECTION 4. Subchapter CC, Chapter 61, Education Code, is
2 amended by adding Section 61.9706 to read as follows:

3 Sec. 61.9706. EVALUATION. (a) The board shall evaluate the
4 effectiveness of the public awareness campaign.

5 (b) In evaluating the effectiveness of the public awareness
6 campaign, the board shall:

7 (1) use appropriate commonly accepted methodologies
8 and evaluation criteria; and

9 (2) spend existing funds available to the board that
10 may be used for the purpose.

11 (c) Not later than December 31, 2010, the board shall submit
12 a written report concerning the results of the evaluation to the
13 governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the house of
14 representatives, and presiding officers of the legislative
15 standing committees with primary jurisdiction over public
16 education and higher education.

17 (d) This section expires January 31, 2011.

18 SECTION 5. Subchapter A, Chapter 56, Education Code, is
19 amended by adding Section 56.005 to read as follows:

20 Sec. 56.005. ADDITIONAL STUDENT FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM. The
21 Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in consultation with the
22 Texas Education Agency, shall develop a plan for a student
23 financial aid program designed:

24 (1) to provide financial aid in addition to:

25 (A) any aid provided under other state financial
26 aid programs;

27 (B) any aid provided under federal financial aid

1 programs; and

2 (C) any contributions from parents; and

3 (2) to provide financial aid to students who:

4 (A) have met the curriculum requirements for the
5 recommended or advanced high school program as determined under
6 Section 28.025; and

7 (B) have not been convicted of a felony or an
8 offense under Chapter 481, Health and Safety Code (Texas Controlled
9 Substances Act), or under the law of another jurisdiction involving
10 a controlled substance as defined by Chapter 481, Health and Safety
11 Code, unless the student has:

12 (i) received a certificate of discharge by
13 the Texas Department of Criminal Justice or a correctional facility
14 or completed a period of community supervision ordered by a court,
15 and at least two years have elapsed from the date of the receipt or
16 completion; or

17 (ii) been pardoned or had the record of the
18 offense expunged from the person's record.

19 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
20 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
21 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
22 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
23 Act takes effect September 1, 2009.