

By: Zaffirini

S.B. No. 31

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to tuition rebates for students who complete certain coursework at two-year public institutions of higher education.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter A, Chapter 54, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 54.0066 to read as follows:

Sec. 54.0066. TUITION REBATES FOR STUDENTS COMPLETING CERTAIN COURSEWORK AT TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

(a) In this section:

(1) "Coordinating board" means the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

(2) "General academic teaching institution," "public junior college," "public state college," and "public technical institute" have the meanings assigned by Section 61.003.

(b) The coordinating board shall establish a program under which an eligible student is entitled to receive a rebate of a portion of the tuition paid to a general academic teaching institution by the student during the student's enrollment at that institution.

(c) A student is eligible to receive a tuition rebate under this section if the student:

(1) is a resident of this state;

(2) enrolls at a public junior college, public state college, or public technical institute not later than the first

1 fall semester following the student's graduation from high school;

2 (3) subject to Subsection (i), successfully completes
3 the core curriculum at or receives an associate degree from a public
4 junior college, public state college, or public technical institute
5 before the third fall semester following the student's graduation
6 from high school, regardless of whether the student:

7 (A) remains continuously enrolled at the same
8 college or institute during that period; or

9 (B) completes through concurrent enrollment any
10 portion of the coursework required to complete the core curriculum
11 or to receive an associate degree;

12 (4) after completing the core curriculum or receiving
13 an associate degree as described by Subdivision (3), enrolls at a
14 general academic teaching institution not later than the third fall
15 semester following the student's graduation from high school;

16 (5) successfully completes one or more courses in the
17 semester or other academic term for which the student receives the
18 rebate;

19 (6) meets financial need requirements prescribed by
20 coordinating board rule; and

21 (7) complies with any additional eligibility
22 requirements prescribed by coordinating board rule.

23 (d) Except as provided by Subsections (e) and (f), the
24 amount of the tuition rebate for each semester or other academic
25 term in which the student is enrolled at the general academic
26 teaching institution is:

27 (1) \$1,000 for a student who received an associate

1 degree; and

2 (2) \$500 for a student who completed the core
3 curriculum without receiving an associate degree.

4 (e) If for a semester or other academic term a student pays
5 to a general academic teaching institution an amount of tuition
6 that is less than the amount of a rebate otherwise required by this
7 section for that semester or other term, the amount of the rebate is
8 equal to the amount of tuition paid by the student.

9 (f) The amount of a rebate under this section for a semester
10 or other academic term may not exceed the amount of tuition paid by
11 the student for courses the student enrolls in and successfully
12 completes in that semester or other term.

13 (g) Except as provided by Subsection (m), a student is not
14 eligible for a tuition rebate under this section for a semester or
15 other academic term that begins after the second anniversary of the
16 date the student first enrolled at the general academic teaching
17 institution.

18 (h) As soon as practicable after the applicable semester or
19 other term, the general academic teaching institution shall refund
20 to the student the amount of the tuition rebate to which the student
21 is entitled. The student may direct that the rebate be applied to
22 any other charges owed to the institution by the student,
23 including:

24 (1) an outstanding student loan; and

25 (2) tuition and fee charges for a subsequent semester
26 or other term.

27 (i) A student who after enrollment at a general academic

teaching institution is eligible under this section to receive a tuition rebate based only on the student's completion of the core curriculum and who subsequently transfers credits to a public junior college, public state college, or public technical institute to earn an associate degree is eligible, for each semester or other term beginning after the associate degree is received, to receive from the general academic teaching institution a tuition rebate in the amount provided by this section for a student who received an associate degree before enrolling at a general academic teaching institution.

(j) A general academic teaching institution is entitled to reimbursement for the cost of providing a tuition rebate to an eligible student under this section. The coordinating board shall reimburse the institution in the appropriate amount from appropriations available for that purpose.

(k) At the beginning of each school year, each public high school in this state shall provide information regarding the requirements of the program under this section to each senior student enrolled at the high school and to a parent, conservator, or guardian of the student. Each public junior college, public state college, or public technical institute shall notify each entering undergraduate student of the program requirements not later than the sixth week of the student's first semester or term.

(l) The Texas Education Agency and the coordinating board jointly shall prepare a publication that includes the information required to be provided under Subsection (k) and shall post that publication on the website of each in a form that enables a public

1 high school, public junior college, public state college, or public
2 technical institute to reproduce the information for distribution
3 to students, parents, and other persons as required by this
4 section.

5 (m) The coordinating board shall adopt rules to administer
6 this section, including rules requiring an eligible student to
7 apply for a tuition rebate under this section and to provide the
8 information required to verify the student's eligibility. The
9 rules must provide procedures by which an otherwise eligible
10 student may be granted additional time to receive tuition rebates
11 under this section if the student shows hardship or other good cause
12 that prevented the student from successfully completing the core
13 curriculum or receiving an associate degree, earning the tuition
14 rebates, or enrolling in an institution within the applicable
15 period prescribed by this section. For purposes of this
16 subsection, hardship or other good cause includes:

17 (1) a severe illness or other debilitating condition;
18 (2) responsibility for the care of a sick or injured
19 person or person otherwise in need of assistance; or
20 (3) active duty or other service in the United States
21 armed forces.

22 (n) A student who receives one or more rebates under this
23 section is not eligible to receive a rebate under Section 54.0065.

24 (o) A student may not receive a tuition rebate under this
25 section for a semester or term before the 2011 fall semester, and
26 may not establish eligibility for a rebate based in any part on
27 higher education coursework completed before the 2009 fall

1 semester. This subsection expires January 1, 2013.

2 SECTION 2. As soon as practicable after the effective date
3 of this Act, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall
4 adopt rules for the administration of Section 54.0066, Education
5 Code, as added by this Act. The coordinating board may adopt the
6 initial rules in the manner provided by law for emergency rules.

7 SECTION 3. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
8 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
9 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
10 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
11 Act takes effect September 1, 2009.