

1-1 By: Zaffirini, Ogden S.B. No. 31
1-2 (In the Senate - Filed November 10, 2008; March 13, 2009,
1-3 read first time and referred to Committee on Higher Education;
1-4 April 20, 2009, reported adversely, with favorable Committee
1-5 Substitute by the following vote: Yeas 4, Nays 0; April 20, 2009,
1-6 sent to printer.)

1-7 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR S.B. No. 31 By: Duncan

1-8 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
1-9 AN ACT

1-10 relating to financial assistance for students who complete certain
1-11 coursework at two-year public institutions of higher education.

1-12 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

1-13 SECTION 1. Chapter 56, Education Code, is amended by adding
1-14 Subchapter Z to read as follows:

1-15 SUBCHAPTER Z. OTHER STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

1-16 Sec. 56.901. GRANTS FOR STUDENTS COMPLETING CERTAIN
1-17 COURSEWORK AT TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION. (a) In
1-18 this section:

1-19 (1) "Coordinating board" means the Texas Higher
1-20 Education Coordinating Board.

1-21 (2) "General academic teaching institution," "public
1-22 junior college," "public state college," and "public technical
1-23 institute" have the meanings assigned by Section 61.003.

1-24 (b) The coordinating board shall establish a program under
1-25 which an eligible student is entitled to receive financial
1-26 assistance in the form of a grant to be applied toward the payment
1-27 of tuition and fees at a general academic teaching institution.

1-28 (c) A student is eligible to receive a grant under this
1-29 section if the student:

1-30 (1) is a resident of this state;

1-31 (2) graduates from a public or accredited private high
1-32 school in this state;

1-33 (3) enrolls at a public junior college, public state
1-34 college, or public technical institute not later than the first
1-35 fall semester following the student's graduation from high school;

1-36 (4) before the third fall semester following the
1-37 student's graduation from high school, and with a cumulative grade
1-38 point average of at least 3.0 on a four-point scale or the
1-39 equivalent, completes the core curriculum at or receives an
1-40 associate degree from a public junior college, public state
1-41 college, or public technical institute, regardless of whether the
1-42 student:

1-43 (A) remains continuously enrolled at the same
1-44 college or institute during that period; or

1-45 (B) completes through concurrent enrollment any
1-46 portion of the coursework required to complete the core curriculum
1-47 or to receive an associate degree;

1-48 (5) after completing the core curriculum or receiving
1-49 an associate degree as described by Subdivision (4), enrolls at a
1-50 general academic teaching institution not later than the third fall
1-51 semester following the student's graduation from high school;

1-52 (6) maintains a cumulative grade point average of at
1-53 least 3.0 on a four-point scale or the equivalent while enrolled at
1-54 a general academic teaching institution;

1-55 (7) meets financial need requirements prescribed by
1-56 coordinating board rule; and

1-57 (8) complies with any additional eligibility
1-58 requirements prescribed by coordinating board rule.

1-59 (d) Except as provided by Subsections (e) and (f), the
1-60 amount of a grant under this section is \$700 for each semester or
1-61 other academic term in which the student is enrolled at a general
1-62 academic teaching institution.

1-63 (e) Subject to the limitation provided by Subsection (f), if

after the application of any other state or federal grant aid a student owes to a general academic teaching institution for a semester or other academic term an amount of tuition and fees that is less than the amount of a grant otherwise provided by this section for that semester or other term, the amount of the grant is equal to the amount of tuition and fees owed by the student that is not covered by that other grant aid.

(f) The total amount of grants under this section for an academic year may not exceed \$1,400.

(g) Except as provided by Subsection (k), a student is not eligible for a grant under this section for a semester or other academic term that begins after the second anniversary of the date the student first enrolled at a general academic teaching institution.

(h) If a student fails to meet any of the requirements of Subsection (c) after the completion of any semester or other academic term, the student may not receive a grant under this section for the next semester or term in which the student enrolls. A student may become eligible to receive a grant under this section in a subsequent semester or term if the student:

(1) completes a semester or term during which the student is not eligible for a grant under this section; and

(2) meets all of the requirements of Subsection (c).

(i) 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.

(j) The Texas Education Agency and the coordinating board jointly shall prepare a publication that includes the information required to be provided under Subsection (i) and shall post that publication on the website of each agency in a form that enables a public high school, public junior college, public state college, or public technical institute to reproduce the information for distribution to students, parents, and other persons as required by this section.

(k) The coordinating board shall adopt rules to administer this section, including rules requiring an eligible student to apply for a grant under this section and to submit the information required to verify the student's eligibility. The rules must provide procedures by which an otherwise eligible student may be granted additional time to receive grants under this section if the student shows hardship or other good cause that prevented the student from successfully completing the core curriculum, receiving an associate degree, or enrolling in an institution within the applicable period prescribed by this section or from maintaining a cumulative grade point average as required by this section. For purposes of this subsection, hardship or other good cause includes:

(1) a severe illness or other debilitating condition;

(2) responsibility for the care of a sick or injured person or person otherwise in need of assistance; or

(3) active duty or other service in the United States armed forces.

(l) A student may not receive a grant under this section for a semester or term before the 2011 fall semester and may not establish eligibility for a grant based in any part on higher education coursework completed before the 2009 fall semester. This subsection expires January 1, 2013.

SECTION 2. As soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall adopt rules for the administration of Section 56.901, Education Code, as added by this Act. The coordinating board may adopt the initial rules in the manner provided by law for emergency rules.

SECTION 3. This Act does not make an appropriation. This Act takes effect only if a specific appropriation for the

3-1 implementation of the Act is provided in a general appropriations
3-2 act of the 81st Legislature.

3-3 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
3-4 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
3-5 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
3-6 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
3-7 Act takes effect September 1, 2009.

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