

By: Shapiro

S.B. No. 954

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT  
2 relating to uniform financial aid award notification for students  
3 and prospective students of public institutions of higher  
4 education.

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

6 SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is  
7 amended by adding Section 61.0885 to read as follows:

8 Sec. 61.0885. UNIFORM FINANCIAL AID NOTIFICATION. (a) The  
9 board by rule shall:

10 (1) require each institution of higher education to  
11 notify any student or prospective student regarding the  
12 institution's financial aid award offered to the student for  
13 attendance at the institution; and

14 (2) prescribe a common financial aid notification form  
15 to be used for that notice regardless of whether the notice is  
16 delivered to the student by mail or electronically.

17 (b) A notice provided using the common financial aid  
18 notification form prescribed by the board under this section must:

19 (1) be suitable for printing, whether delivered by  
20 mail or electronically; and

21 (2) include, in a clear, concise, and uniform manner,  
22 the following information:

23 (A) an itemized list of all financial aid offered  
24 to the student for attendance at the institution, including any

1 financial aid offered by any department, school, or office of the  
2 institution, separated according to the following four categories:

3 (i) gift aid, including grants,  
4 scholarships, and tuition exemptions or waivers;

5 (ii) student loans;

6 (iii) work-study opportunities; and

7 (iv) any other form of financial aid  
8 available to the student;

9 (B) the institution's reasonable estimation of  
10 the total amount of tuition and fees to be charged to the student  
11 for attendance at the institution and a comparison of that  
12 estimated amount to the total amount of gift aid available to the  
13 student under Paragraph (A)(i);

14 (C) the institution's reasonable estimation of  
15 the student's:

16 (i) total cost of full-time attendance at  
17 the institution, including tuition and fees, room and board costs,  
18 book and supply costs, transportation costs, and other personal  
19 expenses;

20 (ii) expected family contribution; and

21 (iii) net financial need; and

22 (D) a clear explanation of the institution's  
23 policies and timelines for accepting or declining the financial aid  
24 award.

25 (c) A private or independent institution of higher  
26 education may use the common financial aid notification form  
27 prescribed by the board under this section to notify students and

1 prospective students regarding the institution's financial aid  
2 award offered to a student for attendance at the institution.

3 (d) An institution of higher education may but is not  
4 required to use the common financial aid award notification form  
5 prescribed by the board under this section for the notification of  
6 financial aid awards for an academic year before the 2011-2012  
7 academic year. This subsection expires September 1, 2011.

8 SECTION 2. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board  
9 shall adopt the rules required by Section 61.0885, Education Code,  
10 as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after this Act takes  
11 effect. For that purpose, the coordinating board may adopt the  
12 initial rules in the manner provided by law for emergency rules.

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