

By: Shapiro

S.B. No. 1559

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the public awareness campaign promoting 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 7th 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.

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 appropriate entities, including businesses, ~~[other agencies as necessary]~~ to develop and implement the public awareness campaign

1 in order to send a strong message concerning the importance of  
2 higher education.

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

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

8 (1) annually hold, on campuses of various institutions  
9 of higher education, meetings of students described by Section  
10 61.9702 and their parents to explain:

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

13 (B) the reasons that higher education is  
14 important; and

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

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

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

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

26 SECTION 4. Subchapter A, Chapter 56, Education Code, is  
27 amended by adding Section 56.005 to read as follows:

1       Sec. 56.005. ADDITIONAL STUDENT FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM. The  
2 Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in consultation with the  
3 Texas Education Agency, shall develop a student financial aid  
4 program designed:

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

6                   (A) any aid provided under other state financial  
7 aid programs;

8                   (B) any aid provided under federal financial aid  
9 programs; and

10                  (C) any contributions from parents; and

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

12                   (A) have met the curriculum requirements for the  
13 recommended or advanced high school program as determined under  
14 Section 28.025; and

15                   (B) have not been convicted of a criminal offense  
16 or found under Section 54.03, Family Code, to have engaged in  
17 delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision.

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