

By: Zaffirini

S.B. No. 1801

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to orientation programs for new students at public institutions of higher education.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter Z, Chapter 51, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 51.978 to read as follows:

Sec. 51.978. ORIENTATION PROGRAM. (a) In this section, "institution of higher education" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

(b) An institution of higher education shall provide an orientation program for each student, including a student transferring to the institution, before or during the first semester or other academic term in which the student is enrolled at the institution.

(c) Each institution of higher education may determine the format and length of and attendance requirements for the orientation program that the institution provides under this section, except that the program must include advising regarding:

(1) the degree and professional programs offered by the institution;

(2) the student's postgraduation goals, including career planning and graduate school; and

(3) transferring to a four-year institution, if the institution offers only lower-division courses.

1 (d) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall
2 provide online resources to assist an institution of higher
3 education in the development and implementation of an orientation
4 program. The resources must focus on programs that have proven
5 successful in improving the retention of students at institutions
6 of higher education.

7 SECTION 2. Section 51.978, Education Code, as added by this
8 Act, applies beginning with students admitted to an institution of
9 higher education for the 2010 fall semester.

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