

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 81ST LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

May 28, 2009

TO: Honorable Joe Straus, Speaker of the House, House of Representatives

FROM: John S. O'Brien, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB2013 by Keffer (Relating to tuition and laboratory fee exemptions at public institutions of higher education for certain volunteer firefighters enrolled in fire science courses.), **As Passed 2nd House**

No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would extend the exemption program for firefighters enrolled in fire science curricula to volunteer firefighters who hold an Accredited Advanced level of certification or an equivalent under the State Firemen's and Fire Marshall's Association of Texas volunteer certification program or a phase V certification or equivalent successor certification under the Texas Commission on Fire Protection's voluntary certification program under Government Code, Section 419.071.

Based on information provided by the Higher Education Coordinating Board, in fiscal year 2008 a total of 1,706 paid firefighters received exemptions totaling \$1,394,202. Approximately 87.16% or 1,487 of the firefighters attended public community colleges and 11.31% or 193 attended public universities. The Texas State Firemen's and Fire Marshall's Association reported that there are approximately 18,000-20,000 paid firefighters in the state and approximately 20,000-30,000 volunteer firefighters, of whom 1,317 had the required credential.

Since the individuals with the required credentials have demonstrated an interest in pursuing additional training/learning, it is assumed the share of volunteer firefighters would equal four times the percentage of paid firefighters (which the Higher Education Coordinating Board estimated as $1,706/19,000 = 8.98\%$ of the paid firefighters). This percentage, multiplied by 4 equals 35.92% of the 1,317 certified volunteer firefighters, or 473 new recipients. They also assumed that the requirement to have been in the unit at least 1 year would reduce this number by 7 percent to 440. They further assumed 45% of this number would enroll in fiscal year 2010, growing by 10% per year thereafter. However, this growth will be tempered by the requirement that students meet school academic progress requirements in order to continue receiving awards. They estimated the impact of this restriction to equal a 5% decrease in the number of recipients, beginning in fiscal year 2011.

Based on these calculations the number of new recipients in fiscal year 2010 attending universities would equal 22 ($440 \cdot .1131 \cdot .45 = 22$). The number at universities in fiscal year 2011 would equal 26 ($440 \cdot .1131 \cdot .55 \cdot .95 = 26$). When comparable calculations are conducted for all types of institutions for all years, they determined that 198 would enroll in fiscal year 2010, growing to 356 in fiscal year 2014.

Based on these assumptions, it is estimated that the decreased tuition and fee revenue for the institutions would total \$252,539 in fiscal year 2010. These decreases would increase as more volunteer firefighters used the exemption.

Local Government Impact

No fiscal implication to units of local government is anticipated.

Source Agencies: 720 The University of Texas System Administration, 758 Texas State University System, 769 University of North Texas System Administration, 781 Higher Education Coordinating Board

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