

By: Seliger, Zaffirini

S.B. No. 497

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the number of semester credit hours required to earn an associate degree at public institutions of higher education.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 61.05151 to read as follows:

Sec. 61.05151. SEMESTER CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED FOR ASSOCIATE DEGREE. (a) To earn an associate degree, a student may not be required by an institution of higher education to complete more than the minimum number of semester credit hours required for the degree by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools or its successor unless the institution determines that there is a compelling academic reason for requiring completion of additional semester credit hours for the degree.

(b) The board may review one or more of an institution's associate degree programs to ensure compliance with this section.

(c) Subsection (a) does not apply to an associate degree awarded by an institution to a student enrolled in the institution before the 2015 fall semester. This subsection does not prohibit the institution from reducing the number of semester credit hours the student must complete to receive the degree.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this

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- 1 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
- 2 Act takes effect September 1, 2013.