

By: Seliger, Zaffirini

S.B. No. 497

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1
2 relating to the number of semester credit hours required to earn an
3 associate degree at public institutions of higher education.

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

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

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

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

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

22 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
23 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
24 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.