

By: Hinojosa, West

S.B. No. 1258

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to improving access to nursing education programs.

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

SECTION 1. Subsections (a) and (b), Section 51.762, Education Code, are amended to read as follows:

(a) The board, with the assistance of an advisory committee composed of representatives of general academic teaching institutions, junior college districts, public state colleges, and public technical institutes, and with the consultation of all institutions of higher education that admit freshman-level students:

(1) shall adopt by rule:

(A) a common admission application form for use by a person seeking admission as a freshman student to a general academic teaching institution; ~~and~~

(B) an electronic common admission application form for use by a person seeking admission as a freshman student to an institution of higher education that admits freshman-level students, other than a general academic teaching institution; and

(C) if the board determines that adoption of the form would be cost-effective for nursing schools, an electronic common admission application form for use by a person seeking admission as a student to an undergraduate nursing education program at an institution of higher education; and

1 (2) may adopt by rule a printed format common
2 admission application form for use by a person seeking admission as
3 a freshman student to an institution of higher education that
4 admits freshman-level students, other than a general academic
5 teaching institution.

6 (b) The board, with the assistance of an advisory committee
7 composed of representatives of general academic teaching
8 institutions, junior college districts, public state colleges, and
9 public technical institutes, and with the consultation of all
10 institutions of higher education that admit undergraduate transfer
11 students, may adopt by rule:

12 (1) a common admission application form for use by a
13 person seeking admission as an undergraduate transfer student to a
14 general academic teaching institution; ~~and~~

15 (2) an electronic or printed format common admission
16 application form for use by a person seeking admission as an
17 undergraduate transfer student to an institution of higher
18 education that admits undergraduate transfer students, other than a
19 general academic teaching institution; and

20 (3) if the board determines that adoption of the form
21 would be cost-effective for nursing schools, an electronic common
22 admission application form for use by a person seeking admission as
23 a transfer student to an undergraduate nursing education program at
24 an institution of higher education.

25 SECTION 2. Section 61.026, Education Code, is amended to
26 read as follows:

27 Sec. 61.026. COMMITTEES AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES. (a) The

1 chairman may appoint committees from the board's membership as the
2 chairman [~~he~~] or the board may find necessary from time to time.
3 The board may appoint advisory committees from outside its
4 membership as it may deem necessary.

5 (b) If the board directs an advisory committee to assist the
6 board in exercising its authority under Section 61.051(j) regarding
7 an off-campus course in nursing education, including clinical
8 coursework, the board shall require the advisory committee to
9 include or consult with one or more for-profit career schools
10 offering nursing education courses in the area where the course is
11 to be offered.

12 SECTION 3. Chapter 61, Education Code, is amended by adding
13 Subchapter II to read as follows:

14 SUBCHAPTER II. NURSING FACULTY LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

15 Sec. 61.9821. REPAYMENT AUTHORIZED. The board shall
16 establish and administer a program to provide, in accordance with
17 this subchapter and board rules, assistance in the repayment of
18 student loans for nurses who:

19 (1) are serving on the faculties of nursing degree
20 programs at institutions of higher education or private or
21 independent institutions of higher education in positions that
22 require an advanced degree in professional nursing; and

23 (2) apply and qualify for the assistance.

24 Sec. 61.9822. ELIGIBILITY. To be eligible to receive loan
25 repayment assistance under this subchapter, a nurse must:

26 (1) apply to the board;

27 (2) at the time of application for repayment

1 assistance have been employed full-time for at least one year as,
2 and be currently employed full-time as, a faculty member of a
3 nursing degree program at an institution of higher education or a
4 private or independent institution of higher education; and

5 (3) comply with any additional requirements adopted by
6 board rule.

7 Sec. 61.9823. LIMITATIONS. (a) On qualifying for loan
8 repayment assistance under this subchapter, a nurse may receive
9 repayment assistance for each year of full-time employment as a
10 faculty member of a nursing degree program at an institution of
11 higher education or private or independent institution of higher
12 education, not to exceed five years.

13 (b) The amount of loan repayment assistance received by a
14 nurse under this subchapter may not exceed \$7,000 in any one year.

15 (c) The total amount of loan repayment assistance provided
16 under this subchapter may not exceed the total amount of gifts and
17 grants accepted by the board for the repayment assistance and other
18 funds available to the board for the repayment assistance,
19 including any money reallocated under Section 61.9826.

20 Sec. 61.9824. ELIGIBLE LOANS. (a) The board may provide
21 repayment assistance for the repayment of any student loan for
22 education at any public or private institution of higher education,
23 including a loan for undergraduate education, received by an
24 eligible person through any lender.

25 (b) The board may not provide repayment assistance for a
26 student loan that is in default at the time of the nurse's
27 application.

1 Sec. 61.9825. REPAYMENT. (a) The board shall deliver any
2 repayment under this subchapter in a lump sum:

3 (1) payable to both the lender or other holder of the
4 loan and the nurse; or

5 (2) directly to the lender or other holder of the loan
6 on the nurse's behalf.

7 (b) A repayment under this subchapter may be applied to any
8 amount due in connection with the loan.

9 Sec. 61.9826. REALLOCATION OF MONEY. (a) In each state
10 fiscal year, the board shall reallocate for loan repayment
11 assistance under this subchapter for a particular year any money in
12 the physician education loan repayment program account established
13 under Section 61.5391 that exceeds the amount necessary in that
14 fiscal year for purposes of repayment assistance under Subchapter
15 J.

16 (b) Any money reallocated under Subsection (a) in a fiscal
17 year that is not used for loan repayment assistance under this
18 subchapter in that fiscal year is treated as if that unused amount
19 had not been reallocated in that fiscal year.

20 Sec. 61.9827. GIFTS AND GRANTS. The board may solicit and
21 accept gifts and grants from any source for the purposes of this
22 subchapter.

23 Sec. 61.9828. RULES. (a) The board shall adopt rules as
24 necessary to administer this subchapter.

25 (b) The board shall distribute a copy of the rules adopted
26 under this section and pertinent information regarding this
27 subchapter to:

1 (1) each institution of higher education and private
2 or independent institution of higher education;

3 (2) any appropriate state agency; and

4 (3) any appropriate professional association.

5 SECTION 4. Subsection (b), Section 61.5391, Education Code,
6 is amended to read as follows:

7 (b) Money in the account may not be appropriated for any
8 purpose except:

9 (1) to provide loan repayment assistance to eligible
10 physicians under this subchapter; or

11 (2) to provide loan repayment assistance under
12 Subchapter II if reallocated under Section 61.9826.

13 SECTION 5. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
14 shall adopt the rules for loan repayment assistance under
15 Subchapter II, Chapter 61, Education Code, as added by this Act, not
16 later than December 1, 2013.

17 SECTION 6. Not later than September 1, 2014, the Texas
18 Higher Education Coordinating Board shall make an initial
19 determination regarding whether adopting electronic common
20 admission application forms for undergraduate nursing education
21 programs would be cost-effective as required by Subsections (a) and
22 (b), Section 51.762, Education Code, as amended by this Act.

23 SECTION 7. This Act takes effect September 1, 2013.