

By: Stephenson

H.B. No. 1708

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1  
2 relating to tuition and fee exemptions for certain students  
3 enrolled in fire science courses at public institutions of higher  
4 education.

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

6 SECTION 1. Section 54.353(a), Education Code, is amended to  
7 read as follows:

8 (a) The governing board of an institution of higher  
9 education shall exempt from the payment of tuition and laboratory  
10 fees any student enrolled in one or more courses offered as part of  
11 a fire science curriculum who:

12 (1) is employed as a firefighter by a political  
13 subdivision of this state; or

14 (2) is currently, and has been for at least one year,  
15 an active member of an organized volunteer fire department  
16 ~~[participating in the Texas Emergency Services Retirement System or~~  
17 ~~a retirement system established under the Texas Local Fire Fighters~~  
18 ~~Retirement Act (Article 6243c, Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes) and]~~

19 who holds:

20 (A) an Accredited Advanced level of  
21 certification, or an equivalent successor certification, under the  
22 State Firefighters' ~~[Firemen's]~~ and Fire Marshals' Association of  
23 Texas volunteer certification program; or

24 (B) Phase V (Firefighter II) certification, or an

1 equivalent successor certification, under the Texas Commission on  
2 Fire Protection's voluntary certification program under Section  
3 [419.071](#), Government Code.

4         SECTION 2. Section [54.353\(a\)](#), Education Code, as amended by  
5 this Act, applies beginning with tuition and laboratory fees  
6 charged for the 2015 fall semester. Tuition and laboratory fees  
7 charged for an academic period before that semester are covered by  
8 the law in effect immediately before the effective date of this Act,  
9 and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

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, 2015.