

By: Thierry

H.B. No. 2355

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to measures to assist students at public institutions of higher education who are homeless.

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

SECTION 1. Section 51.9356, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 51.9356. DESIGNATION OF LIAISON OFFICER TO ASSIST STUDENTS WHO WERE FORMERLY IN FOSTER CARE OR WHO ARE HOMELESS. (a) In this section:

(1) "Institution[, ~~institution~~] of higher education" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

(2) "Students who are homeless" has the meaning assigned to the term "homeless children and youths" under 42 U.S.C. Section 11434a and includes students who reside in a student housing facility maintained by an institution of higher education during an academic term but who are homeless between academic terms.

(b) Each institution of higher education shall designate at least one employee of the institution to act as a liaison officer for current and incoming students who:

(1) [~~students at the institution who~~] were formerly in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services; or

(2) are homeless.

1        (c) The liaison officer shall provide to ~~[those]~~ students  
2 described by Subsection (b) information regarding support  
3 services, including financial aid, on and off campus housing, food  
4 and meal plan programs, and counseling services, and other  
5 resources available to the students at the institution of higher  
6 education and any other relevant information to assist the  
7 students.

8        SECTION 2. The heading to Section 51.978, Education Code,  
9 is amended to read as follows:

10        Sec. 51.978. TEMPORARY HOUSING BETWEEN ACADEMIC TERMS FOR  
11 CERTAIN STUDENTS WHO WERE FORMERLY UNDER CONSERVATORSHIP OF  
12 DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES OR WHO ARE HOMELESS.

13        SECTION 3. Section 51.978(a), Education Code, is amended by  
14 adding Subdivision (3) to read as follows:

15                (3) "Students who are homeless" has the meaning  
16 assigned to the term "homeless children and youths" under 42 U.S.C.  
17 Section 11434a and includes students who reside in a student  
18 housing facility maintained by an institution of higher education  
19 during an academic term but who are homeless between academic  
20 terms.

21        SECTION 4. Section 51.978(b), Education Code, is amended to  
22 read as follows:

23        (b) To be eligible to receive housing assistance from an  
24 institution of higher education under Subsection (c), a student  
25 must:

26                (1) be:

27                        (A) a student who has ~~[have]~~ been under the

conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services  
or its predecessor in function on the day preceding:

(i) ~~[(A)]~~ the student's 18th birthday; or  
(ii) ~~[(B)]~~ the date the student's  
disabilities of minority are removed by a court under Chapter 31,  
Family Code; or

(B) a student who is homeless;

(2) be enrolled full-time at the institution during  
the academic term immediately preceding the period for which the  
student requests the housing assistance;

(3) be registered or otherwise have taken the actions  
required by the institution to permit the student to enroll  
full-time at the institution during the academic term immediately  
following the period for which the student requests the housing  
assistance; and

(4) lack other reasonable temporary housing  
alternatives between the academic terms described by Subdivisions  
(2) and (3), as determined by the institution.

SECTION 5. Subchapter Z, Chapter 51, Education Code, is  
amended by adding Section 51.9781 to read as follows:

Sec. 51.9781. PRIORITY ACCESS TO STUDENT HOUSING FOR  
STUDENTS WHO ARE HOMELESS. (a) In this section:

(1) "Institution of higher education" has the meaning  
assigned by Section 61.003.

(2) "Students who are homeless" has the meaning  
assigned to the term "homeless children and youths" under 42 U.S.C.  
Section 11434a and includes students who reside in a student

1 housing facility maintained by an institution of higher education  
2 during an academic term but who are homeless between academic  
3 terms.

4 (b) Each institution of higher education that maintains  
5 student housing facilities shall give priority in the assignment of  
6 housing in those facilities to students who are homeless.

7 SECTION 6. Section 61.0908, Education Code, is amended to  
8 read as follows:

9 Sec. 61.0908. DESIGNATION OF LIAISON OFFICER TO ASSIST  
10 STUDENTS WHO WERE FORMERLY IN FOSTER CARE OR WHO ARE HOMELESS. (a)  
11 In this section, "students who are homeless" has the meaning  
12 assigned to the term "homeless children and youths" under 42 U.S.C.  
13 Section 11434a and includes students who reside in a student  
14 housing facility maintained by an institution of higher education  
15 during an academic term but who are homeless between academic  
16 terms.

17 (b) The Higher Education Coordinating B[~~o~~]oard shall  
18 designate at least one employee of the board to act as a liaison  
19 officer for current and incoming students at institutions of higher  
20 education who:

21 (1) were formerly in the conservatorship of the  
22 Department of Family and Protective Services; or

23 (2) are homeless.

24 (c) The liaison officer shall assist in coordinating  
25 college readiness and student success efforts relating to [these]  
26 students described by Subsection (b).

27 SECTION 7. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives

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1 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
2 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
3 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
4 Act takes effect September 1, 2017.