

By: Seliger

S.B. No. 950

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to tuition and fee exemptions or waivers at public institutions of higher education.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter D, Chapter 54, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 54.201 to read as follows:

Sec. 54.201. CERTAIN FINANCIAL AID ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION REQUIRED. (a) Notwithstanding any other law and subject to Subsection (b), to qualify for an exemption, waiver, or other benefit authorized under this subchapter for enrollment at an institution of higher education during an academic year, a person must:

(1) complete a free application for federal student aid (FAFSA) for that academic year and:

(A) submit the person's FAFSA student aid report to the institution; or

(B) designate the institution as a preferred institution to receive the report from the United States Department of Education; or

(2) if the person is not eligible to receive federal student aid, complete and submit to the institution the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA) or a similar application for state student financial assistance.

(b) Subsection (a) does not apply to a person who receives a

1 waiver under Section 54.216.

2 SECTION 2. Section 54.341(h), Education Code, is amended to
3 read as follows:

4 (h) The governing board of each institution of higher
5 education shall electronically report to the Texas Higher Education
6 Coordinating Board [~~Veterans Commission~~] the information required
7 by Section 61.0516 [~~434.00791, Government Code,~~] relating to each
8 individual receiving an exemption from fees and charges under
9 Subsection (a), (a-2), (b), or (k). The institution shall report
10 the information not later than January 31 of each year for the fall
11 semester, June 30 of each year for the spring semester, and
12 September 30 of each year for the summer session.

13 SECTION 3. Section 434.00791, Government Code, is
14 transferred to Subchapter C, Chapter 61, Education Code,
15 redesignated as Section 61.0516, Education Code, and amended to
16 read as follows:

17 Sec. 61.0516 [~~434.00791~~]. ELECTRONIC SYSTEM TO MONITOR
18 TUITION EXEMPTIONS FOR VETERANS AND DEPENDENTS [~~FAMILY MEMBERS~~].

19 (a) [~~In this section, "institution of higher education" has the~~
20 ~~meaning assigned by Section 61.003, Education Code.~~

21 [(b)] The board [~~commission~~] shall administer [~~ensure~~] a
22 system to electronically monitor the use of tuition and fee
23 exemptions at institutions of higher education under Section
24 54.341[~~, Education Code, is developed~~]. The system must allow the
25 board [~~commission~~] to electronically receive, for each semester,
26 the following information from institutions of higher education:

27 (1) the name of the institution;

1 (2) the name, identification number, and date of birth
2 of each individual attending the institution and receiving benefits
3 for the semester under Section 54.341[~~Education Code~~];

4 (3) for each individual receiving benefits, the number
5 of credit hours for which the individual received an exemption for
6 the semester;

7 (4) for each individual receiving benefits at the
8 institution during the semester, the total cumulative number of
9 credit hours for which the individual has received an exemption at
10 the institution; and

11 (5) any other information required by the board
12 [~~commission~~].

13 (b) Not later than January 1, 2018, the Texas Veterans
14 Commission, under an agreement with the board, shall provide access
15 to the system developed by the commission that meets the
16 requirements of this section. This subsection expires September 1,
17 2019.

18 SECTION 4. Section 54.201, Education Code, as added by this
19 Act, applies to a person's eligibility for an exemption or waiver
20 from the payment of all or part of tuition or other fees beginning
21 with tuition and fees charged for the 2018 fall semester.

22 SECTION 5. Section 54.341(h), Education Code, as amended by
23 this Act, applies beginning with the report for the 2018 spring
24 semester.

25 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect September 1, 2017.