By:  Howard, et al. H.B. No. 1702

     (Senate Sponsor - Hancock, et al.)

(In the Senate - Received from the House April 16, 2019; April 17, 2019, read first time and referred to Committee on Higher Education; May 8, 2019, reported favorably by the following vote: Yeas 8, Nays 0; May 8, 2019, sent to printer.)

COMMITTEE VOTE

               Yea Nay Absent  PNV

Creighton       X

West            X

Bettencourt     X

Buckingham      X

Flores          X

Menéndez                  X

Powell          X

Taylor          X

Watson          X

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to services provided for students at public institutions of higher education who are or were in foster care.

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

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

Sec. 51.9356.  DESIGNATION OF LIAISON OFFICER TO ASSIST STUDENTS WHO ARE OR WERE [~~FORMERLY~~] IN FOSTER CARE.

SECTION 2.  Section 51.9356, Education Code, is amended by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsections (c), (d), (e), and (f) to read as follows:

(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 at the institution who are or were formerly in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services. To the extent allowed by state or federal law, the institution shall identify those students from information provided to the institution in admission or financial aid applications or other available resources.

(c)  Each semester or other academic term, an institution of higher education shall provide to the institution's liaison officer the names of and information regarding the students described by Subsection (b).

(d)  The liaison officer shall provide to the [~~those~~] students described by Subsection (b) information regarding support services and other resources available to the students at the institution and any other relevant information to assist the students.

(e)  The liaison officer may participate in any training that enables the officer to carry out the officer's duties and coordinate with liaison officers at other educational institutions.

(f)  Each institution of higher education shall publicize, including through the institution's Internet website, social media, electronic mail, or other means of communication used by the institution:

(1)  the name of and contact information for the institution's liaison officer; and

(2)  information regarding support services and other resources available at the institution to the students described by Subsection (b).

SECTION 3.  Not later than January 1, 2020, each public institution of higher education shall publicize the information required by Section 51.9356(f), Education Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 4.  This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2019.

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