

By: Leman, Springer, Nevárez, Stucky, Ashby,
et al.

H.B. No. 539

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT
2 relating to the automatic admission to general academic teaching
3 institutions and eligibility for certain scholarships of a student
4 who is the valedictorian of the student's high school graduating
5 class.

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

7 SECTION 1. Section 51.803, Education Code, is amended by
8 adding Subsection (d-1) and amending Subsection (h) to read as
9 follows:

10 (d-1) In addition to admissions required under Subsection
11 (a), each general academic teaching institution shall admit an
12 applicant for admission to the institution as an undergraduate
13 student if the applicant graduated as the valedictorian of the
14 student's high school graduating class in one of the two school
15 years preceding the academic year for which the student is applying
16 for admission and satisfies the requirements of Subsections (a)(1)
17 through (3). Subsection (b) applies to an applicant for admission
18 under this subsection. An applicant admitted under this subsection
19 is considered automatically admitted for purposes of Subsection
20 (a), (a-1), or (a-2), as applicable.

21 (h) An institution that admits under this section an
22 applicant qualified for automatic admission under Subsection (a) or
23 (d-1) may admit the applicant for either the fall semester of the
24 academic year for which the applicant applies or for the summer

1 session preceding that fall semester, as determined by the
2 institution.

3 SECTION 2. Section 56.484, Education Code, is amended to
4 read as follows:

5 Sec. 56.484. INITIAL ELIGIBILITY FOR SCHOLARSHIP. To be
6 eligible for a scholarship under this subchapter, a student must:

7 (1) have graduated from a public or accredited private
8 high school in this state while ranked in the top 10 percent or as
9 the valedictorian of the student's graduating class, subject to
10 Section 56.487(b);

11 (2) have completed the recommended or advanced high
12 school curriculum established under Section 28.025 or its
13 equivalent;

14 (3) have applied for admission as a first-time
15 freshman student for the 2010-2011 academic year or a subsequent
16 academic year to an institution of higher education that has
17 elected to offer admissions for that academic year to applicants as
18 provided by Section 51.803(a-1);

19 (4) enroll as a first-time freshman student in an
20 institution of higher education not later than the 16th month after
21 the date of the student's high school graduation;

22 (5) have been awarded a TEXAS grant under Subchapter M
23 for the same semester or other academic term for which the
24 scholarship will be awarded;

25 (6) be a Texas resident under Section 54.052; and

26 (7) comply with any other eligibility requirements
27 established by coordinating board rule.

1 SECTION 3. The changes in law made by this Act to Section
2 [51.803](#), Education Code, apply beginning with admissions to a
3 general academic teaching institution for the 2019-2020 academic
4 year. Admissions to a general academic teaching institution for an
5 academic year before that academic year are governed by the law in
6 effect immediately before the effective date of this Act, and the
7 former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

8 SECTION 4. The change in law made by this Act to Section
9 [56.484](#), Education Code, applies beginning with scholarships
10 awarded for the 2019-2020 academic year. Scholarships awarded for
11 an academic year before that academic year are governed by the law
12 in effect immediately before the effective date of this Act, and the
13 former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

14 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
15 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
16 provided by Section [39](#), Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
17 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
18 Act takes effect September 1, 2019.