

BILL ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2815
By: Turner, Chris
Higher Education
Committee Report (Substituted)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Currently a student must complete four years of ROTC training to be eligible for the Texas armed services scholarship. However, this four-year requirement either excludes students who need fewer than four years to graduate or forces those students to stay in school longer than necessary. C.S.H.B. 2815 addresses this overly rigid eligibility requirement in order to allow more students to benefit from the scholarship program. The bill also requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to provide information on the minimum and recommended ROTC service requirements for each entity with which a scholarship recipient may choose to serve after graduating under the scholarship program.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

C.S.H.B. 2815 amends the Education Code to revise the required terms of agreement for a recipient of the Texas armed services scholarship, if that agreement involves the option to complete specified ROTC training, by replacing a requirement that the student complete four years of ROTC training with a requirement that the student complete one year of ROTC training for each year that the student is enrolled in a degree or certificate program at a public or private institution of higher education in Texas, up to a maximum requirement of four years.

C.S.H.B. 2815 requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to post on the THECB website and provide to each student, before the student enters into such an agreement, information regarding the number of years of ROTC training that the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, Texas State Guard, U.S. Merchant Marine, U.S. Coast Guard, and other branches of the U.S. armed services require or recommend before entering into an applicable commitment or contract.

C.S.H.B. 2815 applies beginning with a Texas armed services scholarship awarded for the 2022-2023 academic year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND SUBSTITUTE

While C.S.H.B. 2815 may differ from the original in minor or nonsubstantive ways, the following summarizes the substantial differences between the introduced and committee substitute versions of the bill.

Whereas the original required the student to complete one year of ROTC training for each year that the student receives the scholarship up to a four-year maximum, the substitute requires the student to complete one year of ROTC training for each year that the student is enrolled in a degree or certificate program at an applicable institution of higher education, subject to the same maximum.

The substitute includes a requirement not in the original for the THECB to post on its website and provide to each student information regarding the period of ROTC training required or recommended by applicable military entities.

The substitute does not include a provision that appeared in the original regarding THECB rulemaking.

The substitute changes the academic year from which the bill's provisions apply from 2021-2022, which was specified in the original, to 2022-2023. The substitute changes the original version's effective date of on passage or September 1, 2021, if the bill does not receive the necessary vote, to September 1, 2021.