COMMITTEE VOTE

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A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

relating to an exception to dropped course limitations at public
institutions of higher education for courses dropped during a
disaster that results in a bar or limit on in-person course
attendance.

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

SECTION 1. Section 51.907, Education Code, is amended by
amending Subsection (e) and adding Subsection (e-2) to read as
follows:

(e) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall
adopt rules under which an institution of higher education shall
permit a student to drop more courses under circumstances described
by Subsection (b) than the number of courses permitted to be dropped
under Subsection (c) or under a policy adopted under Subsection (d)
if [the student shows] good cause exists for dropping more than that
number, including:

(1) the student's [a] showing of:

(A) [i] a severe illness or other debilitating
    condition that affects the student's ability to satisfactorily
    complete a course;

(B) [ii] the student's responsibility for the
care of a sick, injured, or needy person if the provision of care
affects the student's ability to satisfactorily complete a course;

(C) [iii] the death of a person who:

   (i) [a] is considered to be a member of
   the student's family under a rule adopted under this subsection for
   purposes of this paragraph [subdivision]; or

   (ii) [b] is otherwise considered to have a
sufficiently close relationship to the student under a rule adopted
under this subsection that the person's death is considered to be a
showing of good cause; or

(D) [iv] the active duty service as a member of
the Texas National Guard or the armed forces of the United States
of:

   (i) [a] the student; or

   (ii) [b] a person who is considered to be a
member of the student's family under a rule adopted under this
subsection for purposes of this paragraph; or

(2) a disaster declared by the governor under Section
418.014, Government Code, resulting in a bar or limit on in-person
course attendance at the institution [subdivision].

(e-2) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section,
an institution of higher education may not count toward the number
of courses permitted to be dropped under Subsection (c) or a policy
adoption under Subsection (d) a course dropped by a student during
the 2020 spring semester or summer term or the 2020-2021 academic
year because of a bar or limit on in-person course attendance at the
institution during the applicable semester or term due to the
coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

SECTION 2. Section 51.907(e), Education Code, as amended by
this Act, applies beginning with the 2021 fall semester.

SECTION 3. 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, 2021.

** ** ** **