

By: Springer

S.B. No. 1811

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to Firefighters Enrolled in Fire Science Courses

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

SECTION 1. Sec 54.353, Education Code, is amended to read as follows: (a) The governing board of an institution of higher education shall exempt from the payment of tuition and laboratory fees any student enrolled in one or more courses offered as part of a fire science curriculum who:

(1) is employed as a firefighter by a political subdivision of this state; or

(2) a member in good standing in a volunteer firefighter department, registered with Texas Forest Service and providing 911 service to a designated area: ~~is currently, and has been for at least one year, an active member of an organized volunteer fire department participating in the Texas Emergency Services Retirement System or a retirement system established under the Texas Local Fire Fighters Retirement Act (Article 6243c, Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes)~~ and who holds:

(i) attends at least 20 hours of annual training;

(ii) attends or provides support services for at least 25 percent of the departments emergencies in a calendar year; and

(iii) and who holds:

(A) an Accredited Advanced level of certification, or

1 an equivalent successor certification, under the State
2 Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas volunteer
3 certification program; or

4 (B) Phase V (Firefighter II) certification, or an
5 equivalent successor certification, under the Texas
6 Commission on Fire Protection's voluntary certification
7 program under Section [419.071](#), Government Code.

8 (b) An exemption provided under this section does not apply
9 to deposits that may be required in the nature of security for the
10 return or proper care of property loaned for the use of students.

11 (c) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), a student who for a
12 semester or term at an institution of higher education receives an
13 exemption under this section may continue to receive the exemption
14 for a subsequent semester or term at any institution only if the
15 student makes satisfactory academic progress toward a degree or
16 certificate at that institution as determined by the institution
17 for purposes of financial aid.

18 (d) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), the exemption provided
19 under this section does not apply to any amount of additional
20 tuition the institution elects to charge a resident undergraduate
21 student under Section [54.014](#)(a) or (f).

22 (e) Notwithstanding Subsection (a), the exemption provided
23 under this section does not apply to any amount of tuition the
24 institution charges a graduate student in excess of the amount of
25 tuition charged to similarly situated graduate students because the
26 student has a number of semester credit hours of doctoral work in
27 excess of the applicable number provided by Section [61.059](#)(1)(1) or

1 (2).

2 (f) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board shall
3 adopt:

4 (1) rules governing the granting or denial of an
5 exemption under this section, including rules relating to the
6 determination of a student's eligibility for an exemption;
7 and

8 (2) a uniform listing of degree programs covered by
9 the exemption under this section.

10 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021