

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1350
By: LaMantia
Subcommittee on Higher Education
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In Texas, many paramedics working for a political subdivision are also employed as firefighters. Since firefighters are eligible for a tuition exemption for certain emergency preparedness courses offered at public institutions of higher education, many paramedics have likewise benefited from these courses and the tuition exemption. However, this tuition exemption is unavailable to approximately 3,000 paramedics who are not employed as firefighters. S.B. 1350 seeks to eliminate this discrepancy and better prepare paramedics to serve our communities by providing a similar tuition exemption to all paramedics.

As proposed, S.B. 1350 amends current law relating to the exemption of tuition and laboratory fees at public institutions of higher education for certain paramedics.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in SECTION 1 (Section 54.3532, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter D, Chapter 54, Education Code, by adding Section 54.3532, as follows:

Sec. 54.3532. PARAMEDICS ENROLLED IN CERTAIN COURSES. (a) Requires the governing board of an institution of higher education to exempt from the payment of tuition and laboratory fees any student enrolled in one or more courses offered as part of an emergency medical services curriculum who is employed as a paramedic by a political subdivision of this state.

(b) Provides that an exemption provided under this section does not apply to deposits that are authorized to be required in the nature of security for the return or proper care of property loaned for the use of students.

(c) Authorizes a student who for a semester or term at an institution of higher education receives an exemption provided under this section, notwithstanding Subsection (a), to continue to receive the exemption for a subsequent semester or term at any institution only if the student makes satisfactory academic progress toward a degree or certificate at that institution as determined by the institution for purposes of financial aid.

(d) Provides that the exemption provided under this section, notwithstanding Subsection (a), does not apply to any amount of additional tuition the institution elects to charge a resident undergraduate student under Section 54.014(a) (relating to authorizing an institution of higher education to charge a resident undergraduate student tuition at a higher rate if the student has previously attempted a number of semester credit hours that exceeds the number of semester credit hours required for completion of the degree program) or (f) (relating to authorizing an institution of higher education to charge a resident undergraduate

student tuition at a higher rate for any course that is the same as or substantively identical to a course for which the student previously completed).

(e) Provides that the exemption provided under this section, notwithstanding Subsection (a), does not apply to any amount of tuition the institution charges a graduate student in excess of the amount of tuition charged to similarly situated graduate students because the student has a number of semester credit hours of doctoral work in excess of the applicable number provided by Section 61.059(1)(1) (relating to prohibiting the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) from including in certain formulas funding based on the number of doctoral students who have a total of 100 or more semester credit hours of doctoral work at an institution of higher education) or (2) (relating to authorizing THECB to approve formula funding for semester credit hours in excess of 100, not to exceed 130 total semester credit hours, for a doctoral student if the institution meets certain criteria).

(f) Provides that the governing board of an institution of higher education, notwithstanding Subsection (a), is not required to provide an exemption under this section for a course offered exclusively through distance education to a number of students enrolled in the course in excess of 20 percent of the maximum student enrollment designated by the institution for that course.

(g) Requires THECB to adopt:

(1) rules governing the granting or denial of an exemption provided under this section, including rules:

(A) prescribing the educational attainment or level of certification necessary to qualify for an exemption as a paramedic;

(B) relating to the determination of a student's eligibility for an exemption; and

(C) relating to the exclusion from the exemption under Subsection (f) of a distance education course, including prescribing the maximum number of distance education courses that are authorized to be excluded from the exemption under that subsection; and

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

SECTION 2. (a) Requires THECB to adopt the rules required by Section 54.3532, Education Code, as added by this Act, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act.

(b) Provides that Section 54.3532, Education Code, as added by this Act, applies beginning with tuition and laboratory fees charged for the 2023 fall semester. Provides that tuition and laboratory fees charged for an academic period before that semester are governed by the law in effect immediately before the effective date of this Act, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2023.