

By: Paxton

S.B. No. 412

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to protections for pregnant and parenting students enrolled in public institutions of higher education.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter 2, Chapter 51, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 51.982 to read as follows:

Sec. 51.982. PROTECTIONS FOR PREGNANT AND PARENTING STUDENTS. (a) In this section:

(1) "Institution of higher education" has the meaning assigned by Section 61.003.

(2) "Parenting student" means a student who is the parent or legal guardian of a child under 18 years of age.

(b) An institution of higher education may not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of the student's status as a pregnant or parenting student or due to issues related to the student's pregnancy or parenting, to:

(1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from the student's degree or certificate program;

(2) limit the student's studies;

(3) participate in an alternative program;

(4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or

(5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the institution.

1       (c) An institution of higher education shall provide  
2 reasonable accommodations to a pregnant student, including  
3 accommodations that:

4           (1) would be provided to a student with a temporary  
5 medical condition; or

6           (2) are related to the health and safety of the student  
7 and the student's unborn child, such as by allowing the student to  
8 maintain a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities  
9 known to be hazardous to pregnant women or unborn children.

10       (d) An institution of higher education shall, for reasons  
11 related to a student's pregnancy, childbirth, or any resulting  
12 medical status or condition:

13           (1) excuse the student's absence;

14           (2) allow the student to make up missed assignments or  
15 assessments; and

16           (3) allow the student additional time to complete  
17 assignments in the same manner as the institution allows for a  
18 student with a temporary medical condition.

19       (e) An institution of higher education shall allow a  
20 pregnant or parenting student to:

21           (1) take a leave of absence; and

22           (2) if in good academic standing at the time the  
23 student takes a leave of absence, return to the student's degree or  
24 certificate program in good academic standing without being  
25 required to reapply for admission.

26       (f) Each institution of higher education shall adopt a  
27 policy for students on pregnancy and parenting discrimination. The

1 policy must be:

2 (1) posted in an easily accessible, straightforward  
3 format on the institution's Internet website; and

4 (2) made available annually to faculty, staff, and  
5 employees of the institution.

6 (g) The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, in  
7 consultation with institutions of higher education, shall adopt  
8 rules as necessary to administer this section. The rules must  
9 establish minimum periods for which a pregnant or parenting student  
10 must be given a leave of absence under Subsection (e). In  
11 establishing those periods, the board shall consider the maximum  
12 amount of time a student may be absent without significantly  
13 interfering with the student's ability to complete the student's  
14 degree or certificate program.

15 SECTION 2. Not later than January 15, 2024, each public  
16 institution of higher education shall adopt and post on the  
17 institution's Internet website the policy on pregnancy and  
18 parenting discrimination required under Section 51.982(f),  
19 Education Code, as added by this Act.

20 SECTION 3. Section 51.982, Education Code, as added by this  
21 Act, applies beginning with the 2024 spring semester.

22 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.