

By: Menéndez

S.B. No. 455

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1  
2 relating to the measures to encourage eligible students to claim  
3 certain tuition and fee exemptions at public institutions of higher  
4 education for students who are or have been in foster or other  
5 residential care.

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

7 SECTION 1. Section 54.366(b), Education Code, is amended to  
8 read as follows:

9 (b) The Texas Education Agency and the Texas Higher  
10 Education Coordinating Board shall develop outreach programs to  
11 ensure that students in the conservatorship of the Department of  
12 Family and Protective Services and in grades 9 through 12 [~~9-12~~] are  
13 aware of the availability of the exemption from the payment of  
14 tuition and fees provided by this section. The outreach programs  
15 must include the provision of informational materials regarding the  
16 exemption to each:

17 (1) residential child-care facility as defined by  
18 Section 42.002, Human Resources Code;

19 (2) foster parent or relative or other designated  
20 caregiver for a student enrolled in grade 9 through 12; and

21 (3) school district, open-enrollment charter school,  
22 and private school offering grade nine or above.

23 SECTION 2. Section 54.367(b), Education Code, is amended to  
24 read as follows:

1 (b) The Texas Education Agency and the Texas Higher  
2 Education Coordinating Board shall develop outreach programs to  
3 ensure that adopted students in grades 9 through 12 [~~9-12~~] formerly  
4 in foster or other residential care are aware of the availability of  
5 the exemption from the payment of tuition and fees provided by this  
6 section. The outreach programs must include the provision of  
7 informational materials regarding the exemption to each:

8 (1) residential child-care facility as defined by  
9 Section 42.002, Human Resources Code;

10 (2) adoptive parent of a student in grade 9 through 12  
11 who was formerly in foster or other residential care; and

12 (3) school district, open-enrollment charter school,  
13 and private school offering grade nine or above.

14 SECTION 3. Subchapter D, Chapter 54, Education Code, is  
15 amended by adding Section 54.3671 to read as follows:

16 Sec. 54.3671. STREAMLINED ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION AND  
17 APPLICATION PROCESS FOR CERTAIN STUDENTS. The Texas Higher  
18 Education Coordinating Board and the Department of Family and  
19 Protective Services shall jointly design and implement a  
20 streamlined eligibility determination and application process for  
21 the tuition and fee exemptions provided by Sections 54.366 and  
22 54.367. The streamlined process must:

23 (1) be designed to decrease the administrative burden  
24 on the department and students in determining exemption eligibility  
25 by reducing data collection, data entry, and the copying and  
26 recopying of applications;

27 (2) include a system through which a student may apply

1 for an exemption electronically through the department's Internet  
2 website; and

3 (3) for a student determined by the department to be  
4 eligible for an exemption, provide for the automatic submission by  
5 the department to the institution of higher education indicated by  
6 the student of the tuition waiver letter or other documentation  
7 required by the institution to verify the student's eligibility.

8 SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
9 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
10 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
11 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
12 Act takes effect September 1, 2023.