**BILL ANALYSIS**

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| Senate Research Center | H.B. 300 |
| 89R21370 CMO-D | By: Wilson (Hancock) |
|  | Veteran Affairs |
|  | 4/28/2025 |
|  | Engrossed |

**AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT**

H.B. 300 updates and streamlines the Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program (TASSP).

Details

• H.B. 300 restores the original intent of the program to provide a scholarship to cover the average cost of attendance at an institution of higher education in the state, should sufficient funds be appropriated to do so.

• Allows the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to reinstate a student if they were removed erroneously.

• Defines a deadline of September 30 of each year for appointments for state senators and representatives, with any unused appointments filled by the lieutenant governor and speaker of the house.

• Provides additional clarification to existing law that allows a student to fulfill the service commitment by serving in the Texas State Guard, and that the State Guard's Officer Training School can fulfill the Undergraduate Commission Program requirement.

• H.B. 300 creates a scholarship coordinator position at THECB. The scholarship has very specific stipulations that require careful navigation by both the student and financial aid offices. As a result, many students have lost eligibility due to a misunderstanding by one or both parties. To help ensure that students and financial aid offices complete the process properly, the scholarship coordinator will:

o Provide a single point of contact for students, families, and financial aid offices;

o Follow up with each student nominated to assist in the coordination of documentation;

o Stay in contact with recipients through their first year to ensure both the student and the financial aid office are aware of what steps still need to be taken to successfully renew the scholarship; and

o Provide continuity between legislatures to assist with the nominating process.

H.B. 300 amends current law relating to the Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program.

**RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

Rulemaking authority previously granted to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board is modified in SECTION 3 (Section 61.9773, Education Code) of this bill.

**SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS**

SECTION 1. Amends Section 61.9771(b), Education Code, to provide that the amount of a scholarship under Subchapter FF (Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program) in an academic year is the lesser of certain amounts, including the greater of $30,000 or an amount equal to the average cost of attendance at an institution of higher education in this state, as determined by Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) rule, rather than $15,000.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 61.9772, Education Code, by amending Subsections (a) and (b) and adding Subsection (b-1), as follows:

(a) Requires a student, to receive an initial scholarship under this subchapter, to:

(1) be enrolled in a public or private institution of higher education in this state and, while enrolled at the institution:

(A) enroll in and be a member in good standing of a Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program or another officer commissioning program such as the United States Marine Corps Platoon Leaders Class, rather than another undergraduate officer commissioning program such as the United States Marine Corps Platoon Leaders Class while enrolled in a public or private institution of higher education in this state;

(B) submit to THECB proof of the student's successful completion of a program described by Paragraph (A); or

(C) submit to THECB proof of the student's acceptance into the officer commissioning program for the Texas State Guard, as defined by Section 437.001 (Definitions), Government Code; and

(2)-(3) redesignates existing Subdivisions (3)-(4) as Subdivisions (2)-(3) and makes no further changes.

Makes nonsubstantive changes to this subsection.

(b) Requires, rather than authorizes, the governor and the lieutenant governor, in each year, to each appoint two students and two alternates and requires, rather than authorizes, each state senator and each state representative to appoint one student and one alternate to receive an initial scholarship under this subchapter. Makes a nonsubstantive change.

(b-1) Requires a state senator or state representative to make the appointments required by Subsection (b) not later than September 30 of each year. Requires the lieutenant governor or the speaker of the house of representatives, as appropriate, if a state senator or state representative fails to make a timely appointment in accordance with this subsection, to promptly fill the vacancy in appointment or designate a member of their respective chamber to promptly make the appointment on their behalf.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 61.9773, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 61.9773. AGREEMENT REQUIREMENTS. (a) Requires that the agreement with THECB as provided by this section require the student to:

(1) satisfy one of the following requirements:

(A) complete or submit to THECB proof that the student previously completed one year of ROTC training for each year that the student receives the scholarship;

(B) complete or submit to THECB proof that the student previously completed another officer commissioning program, rather than another undergraduate officer commissioning program, such as the United States Marine Corps Platoon Leaders Class; or

(C) submit to THECB proof of the student's acceptance into the officer commissioning program for the Texas State Guard, as defined by Section 437.001, Government Code; and

(2)-(5) makes no changes to these subdivisions.

Makes nonsubstantive changes to this subsection.

(b) Requires THECB to adopt rules to exempt a student from the repayment of a scholarship under an agreement entered into under this section if the student is unable to meet the obligations of the agreement solely as a result of physical inability or an extraordinary circumstance outside the student's control. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

(c) Requires THECB, if THECB determines that a student who entered into an agreement with THECB under this section was erroneously removed from the scholarship program established under this subchapter, to reinstate the student's scholarship if the student is currently enrolled in a public or private institution of higher education in this state.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 61.9775, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 61.9775. LIMITATIONS ON SCHOLARSHIP. Prohibits a person from receiving a scholarship under this subchapter for more than four academic years. Deletes existing text prohibiting a person from receiving a scholarship under this subchapter after earning a cumulative total of 150 credit hours or after being awarded a baccalaureate degree, whichever occurs first.

Deletes text of existing Subsection (b) requiring that a scholarship awarded to a student under this subchapter be reduced for an academic year by a certain amount. Makes a nonsubstantive change

SECTION 5. Amends Subchapter FF, Chapter 61, Education Code, by adding Section 61.9777, as follows:

Sec. 61.9777. SCHOLARSHIP COORDINATOR. Requires THECB to designate an employee of THECB to serve as a scholarship coordinator for scholarships awarded under this subchapter. Requires the scholarship coordinator to:

(1) serve as a liaison and point of contact for students appointed to receive a scholarship under this subchapter; and

(2) coordinate with financial aid offices at public and private institutions of higher education in this state and with relevant military personnel on behalf of scholarship recipients to ensure students fully understand the requirements of this subchapter.

SECTION 6. Provides that this Act applies beginning with the 2025–2026 academic year.

SECTION 7. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2025.