

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

Senate Research Center  
89R3090 CXP-F

S.B. 750  
By: Eckhardt et al.  
Education K-16  
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As Filed

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

In Texas, most 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, most paramedics have likewise benefited from these courses and the tuition exemption. However, this tuition exemption is unavailable to approximately 6,000 paramedics (around 9 percent of paramedics) who are employed by a standalone EMS department.

S.B. 750 seeks to eliminate this discrepancy and better prepare paramedics to serve our communities by providing a similar tuition exemption to all paramedics. The bill generally provides the same benefits and restrictions to paramedics as are provided to firefighters in Section 54.353 (Firefighters Enrolled in Fire Science Courses), Education Code, including that the exemption does not apply to:

- security deposits authorized by state law for the return or proper care of property loaned for the use of students;
- students who fail to make satisfactory academic progress toward a degree or certificate, as determined by the institute of higher education; and
- additional tuition that institutions of higher education may charge a student if the student exceeds the required course hours or has previously completed the course.

However, unlike the existing statute, S.B. 750 includes a provision that allows institutions of higher education to cap the number of students using the exemption for a course taught exclusively through distance education at 20 percent of the maximum student enrollment for the course. This clause was included at the request of many institutions of higher education to ensure there is no significant fiscal impact from the bill. The cap would not apply to the existing tuition exemptions for firefighters or law enforcement.

As proposed, S.B. 750 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 may 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, notwithstanding Subsection (a), the exemption provided under this section 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 than the rate charged to other resident undergraduate students under certain circumstances) or (f) (relating to authorizing an institution of higher education to charge a resident undergraduate student tuition at a higher rate than the rate charged to other resident undergraduate students in certain courses).

(e) Provides that, notwithstanding Subsection (a), the exemption provided under this section 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 any formula under this section funding based on the number of doctoral students who have a certain number of semester credit hours of doctoral work) or (2) (relating to authorizing THECB to approve formula funding for a certain number of semester credit hours for a doctoral student if the institution provides THECB with certain information).

(f) Provides that, notwithstanding Subsection (a), the governing board of an institution of higher education 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 may 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, as soon as practicable after the effective date of this Act, to adopt the rules required by Section 54.3532, Education Code, as added by 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 2025 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, 2025.